The Bookman.

"I am a Bookman."—*James Russell Lowell.*

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NOTICES.

All communications intended for the Editor must be addressed to the Editor of The Bookman, St. Paul's House, Warwick Square, London, E.C.4.

A preliminary letter of inquiry should be sent to the Editor before any manuscript is submitted for his consideration.

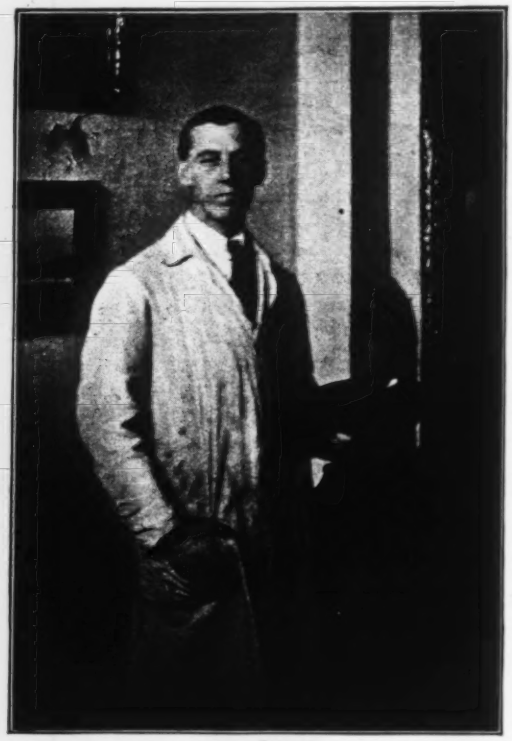
News Notes.

"Though The Bookman is now in its twenty-ninth year," writes one who describes himself as a subscriber from the beginning, "your long series of mounted portraits has never included one of the founder and editor-in-chief." In response to many such letters from Bookman and *British Weekly* readers, we are giving with this Number a presentation plate portrait of Sir W. Robertson Nicoll, from a drawing made at a special sitting last month by Mr. Robert J. Swan.

"Roman Essays and Interpretations," by W. Warde Fowler, will be published in the spring by the Oxford Press.

Everybody knows how easy it is to believe a good story, and how far it will go, once it gets started. In September, 1916, Mr. Spencer Leigh Hughes, M.P., gave in *London Opinion* an entirely fictitious account of the wonders of the then newly invented Tanks. "They can," he wrote, "do up prisoners in bundles like straw-binders, and have an adaptation from a printing machine which enables them to catch the Huns, fold, count and deliver them in quires, every thirteenth man being thrown out a little farther than the others." This and more in the way of humorous exaggeration Mr. Hughes wrote playfully in *London Opinion*; but in the following February the same appeared in the *Daily Express* as a communication from a private in the Middlesex Regiment; and five months later it cropped up in the *Daily Mail* as part of a letter from a private in the Devonshire Regiment; then Sir Albert Stern adopted it as "a Tommy's impression," and put it into his log-book of a pioneer, "Tanks," which after running serially in the *Strand* has been published by Hodder & Stoughton. Meanwhile, the story has been quoted from it in more papers than one can count, so *London Opinion* and Mr. Hughes may well be proud of adding so much to the gaiety of nations. "Tanks," by the way, is one of the most interesting and important of recent war books. The story of how Sir Albert Stern had to fight the War Office before the tanks were allowed a chance on the battle-fields at all cannot be too widely known and should help to rouse the country to put an end to the antiquated system that nearly lost the war for us.

The good bookman who is interested in rare editions and first editions of old and modern books will find plenty of attractive items in the latest catalogues of the well-known Birmingham second-hand bookseller, Mr. Edward Baker. His first editions of Hardy, Kipling, George Moore, Dickens,



Mr. Robert J. Swan,

the young artist whose eight portrait-drawings of living authors were a special feature of the Christmas BOOKMAN. His portrait of Prebendary Webb-Peploe was hung in the Academy in 1915, and he is at present engaged on a portrait of the well-known Labour M.P., the Hon. William Brace.

Sheridan, Lever, Disraeli, Gissing, Swinburne, Stevenson, and early or rare editions of many another are "finds" that not a few collectors are looking for.

M. Emile Guillaumin, whose remarkable book, "The Life of a Simple Man" (Selwyn & Blount), we review in this Number, is a French peasant-farmer living at Ygrande in an almost new stone house, well built and with good outbuildings for his animals. His farm consists of between seven and eight acres. "It is interesting and touching," says one who knows him, "to see how he has realised his ideal to 'have a house containing several rooms, the one in which one eats being separate from the one in which one sleeps.' The stone house built out of his savings has its room for eating in, several bedrooms, its kitchen used solely for kitchen purposes, and the peasant-author's work-room lined with books and with portraits of admired authors. Ordinarily, he works in this room from eight to twelve each day and again in the evenings, spending the rest of the day on the farm, working in blouse and sabots. On days when he is engaged on special literary work he rises at four, wraps himself in an army blanket and writes until six, then out to feed his beasts, and back to his study to work from eight to twelve, then on to the farm till dark. 'The Life of a Simple Man' was not written in the new house but in the two-room cottage on the adjoining farm, which belongs to his father who, by the way, is not the original of Tiennon, the hero of his book, as so many, including Mr. Garnett, have supposed. Guillaumin is a distinguished personality, simple, shy, modest, very gentle and humorous, not at all striking in appearance. He has soft, mild eyes that do not miss the slightest detail. Children and animals know and trust him. He and his young, charming wife, 'a peasant like myself,' said Guillaumin, have the gift of hospitality. In the house of his dreams there is a 'guest chamber.' He has written about eight volumes, and numerous articles for magazines and newspapers, many of the latter being written under apparently impossible conditions during his four and half years service in the war. Neither he nor his much-loved, deeply-mourned friend, Charles Louis Phillipe, who wrote that memorable book, 'Mother and Child,' were likely to have been authors had they been born five years earlier, but the compulsory Education Act came into force in France in 1880, and so they went to school."

Another child author, Miss Christine Oertling, who is still only thirteen, published a book, "The

Mrs. Coulson Kernahan,

whose new story for girls, "Peg o' the Prairie" (Sharp), is reviewed in this Number.

Passing of the Shadows" (Foyle), a few weeks ago. This had been written and was in the hands of the publishers some time before Miss Daisy Ashford's "The Young Visiters" made its appearance. Before writing her novel Miss Oertling had written and produced two charming fairy pastoral plays. The first of these, "The Spirit of the Pools," was done before her family was aware of her talent, and the two plays were produced with great success in the picturesque grounds of her parents' home at Barnes, in aid of the Sir William Treloar Cripples' Hospital.

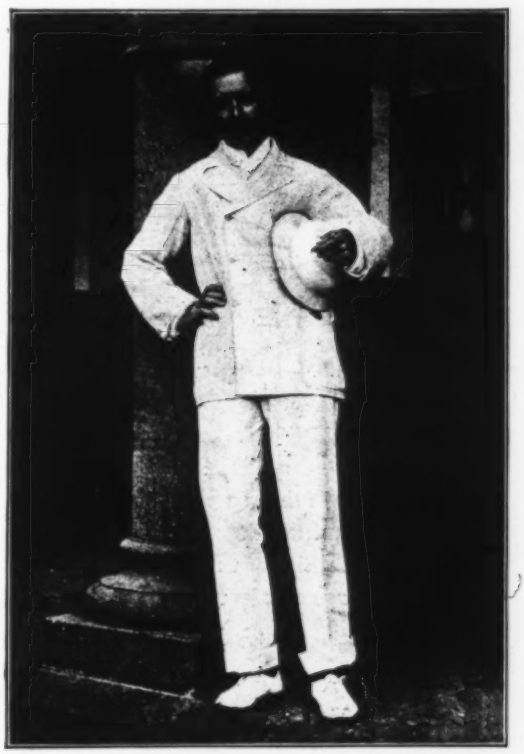


Photo by P. Metzker, Secunderabad. **Mr. F. W. Bain.**

Mr. F. W. Bain, whose latest book, "The Substance of a Dream" (Methuen), is a dainty and fascinating love story, "simple as an old ballad and yet subtler than Mephistopheles," is Principal and Professor of History and Political Economy in the Deccan College, Poona. Apart from historical, philosophical and economic works, he has written thirteen books of stories—things of exquisite fantasy, imagination and vision, the most popular of which is perhaps "A Digit of the Moon." Last spring he published "An Echo of the Spheres" (Methuen), a volume of poems by his mother. He tells in an introduction how he induced his mother to give him the MS. book containing them a few years before her death, and the charm and sweetness and dramatic power of her lyrics and ballads more than justify him in rescuing them from oblivion.

Mrs. Virginia Woolf,
whose new novel, "Night and Day," Messrs. Duckworth have published.

The poems are, as Mr. Bain says, largely autobiographical, and they confirm his own picture of the courage and strength and beauty of her character,

Miss Rachel Swete Macnamara,
whose new book, "The Little Book of Dew," Messrs. Selwyn & Blount are publishing.

and after reading them, one is prepared to agree with him that "as a writer of short poems, I do not know where to look for one of her own sex to put beside her." Incidentally, the introduction probably reveals, between the lines, more of Mr. Bain's earlier days and of his own personality than is to be drawn from anything that has yet been written of himself.

The publication of the revised and enlarged edition of "For Remembrance: Soldier Poets who have Fallen in the War," by A. St. John Adcock, has been postponed and the book will now be ready early in January.

Messrs. Macmillan have added to their Golden Treasury series an anthology of "Seventeenth Century English Verse," chosen and edited by H. J. Massingham. The period covered is from the death of Shakespeare to the Reformation, and

Photo by Morrison, Edinburgh.

Mr. Robert W. Napier, F.R.S.A.,

whose recently published "John Thomson of Duddingston, Landscape Painter," was reviewed in THE BOOKMAN Christmas Number.

Captain John King Davis,

whose "With the *Aurora* in the Antarctic" Mr. Andrew Melrose is publishing.

Mr. Massingham has done his work thoroughly and with a nice critical judgment. He omits Herrick and Milton altogether because they are so fully represented in many cheap anthologies; but he makes amends by finding room to bring back to remembrance several very charming things that other anthologists have overlooked. The notes at the end of the book are ample and scholarly.

Those who are looking for effective work to recite will find what they want in "Another Five-Minute Recitations" (3s. 6d. net, Oliver & Boyd), selected and edited by A. B. Harley as a companion volume to his very successful "Five-Minute Recitations." Mr. Harley is well known in Edinburgh as a teacher of elocution. While he was on active service, through the war, he was in great demand at camp concerts and has gathered into this volume the prose and verse, serious and humorous, that met with most favour from his soldier audiences. It is an excellent, catholic collection from a goodly company of English

Photo by A. Haley, Colwyn Bay. **Miss Myfanwy Price,**
whose new novel, "Blue Moons" (Hodder & Stoughton), is reviewed in this Number.

and American authors, including a liberal allowance of copyright work by well-known living writers. Mr. Harley has been guided in his compilation by the knowledge that comes of wide practical experience, and has chosen his poems and sketches for some strong or picturesque narrative or dramatic quality that makes them eminently suitable for the purposes of the reciter.

The fifth "Monthly Chapbook" (1s. 6d. net, Poetry Bookshop) is "Rhymes for Children," a delightful collection of seventeen quaint, simple poems of the kind beloved by mid-Victorian nurseries illustrated with admirable and appropriately quaint woodcuts.

After forty-eight years of service with Messrs. W. H. Smith & Son, Mr. George Tyler has felt justified in going into retirement at the age of sixty-five and taking life a little easier. He was seventeen when he became assistant at Smith & Son's Peterborough railway bookstall. Having served and proved his capacity at several other stalls, he was made manager of their large Midland Railway bookstall at Nottingham, greatly extending the firm's business in those parts and eventually becoming superintendent of the large Nottingham district, with a considerable staff of managers and assistants. In 1904, when Messrs. Smith & Son ceased to control the bookstalls on two important railway systems, Mr. Tyler was transferred to London and entrusted with the onerous task of establishing bookshops in every locality that had been served by the bookstalls given up. Not only did he make a complete success of this scheme, but he proceeded to establish a vast chain of bookshops all over England and Wales and remained in control of these until his retirement. If any testimony to Mr. Tyler's popularity with his colleagues were needed, it came when the district superintendents and heads of departments recently invited him to a farewell luncheon at the Connaught Rooms, and then, and later in the staff's club-room, presented him with tangible and handsome souvenirs of their appreciation of his work and regard for himself. Many authors, without being aware of it, are much indebted to Mr. Tyler, who has always taken more than a business interest in books and had a special and effective method of calling the attention of his shop managers to books of real quality that they should not fail to recommend to their customers, and so helped to deserved success many a book that might otherwise have been more or less overlooked. His retirement is thus a real loss to the literary world as well as to his immediate business circle, and the numerous letters that are still reaching him are the best evidence he could wish that the holiday-life he is going to give himself has been well earned.

Mr. George Tyler.

THE READER.

MRS. W. K. CLIFFORD.

By Wilfrid L. Randell.

IT is natural to seek, in the work of a writer whose novels have been familiar to the public of two continents for a considerable period of years, for some undertone in the general music, to be listened for and recognised, accepted and comprehended, just as in a fugue one hears with a sense of pleasure the recurrent theme. To miss this is to be out of touch, and the pity of so much freely-selling modern fiction is that it contains nothing to satisfy the attentive reader who desires something less superficial than mere entertainment.

Exactly how many novels and plays Mrs. W. K. Clifford has written I do not know; but in those I have read—a goodly number—this undertone persists, and I should define it as the beauty of the world, the joy of living, the happiness of doing well whatever task life has set before you—terms to some extent interdependent, for if you see the world as beautiful, and rejoice in work of any sort thoroughly done (whether handicraft or achievements of the intellect) you secure the joy of living. There are other themes, but this is the principal one. When the woman in one of the "Anyhow Stories" saw the picture painted by an artist who loved his work, "I used to think," she said, "that it was a blessed thing for us all to live in so beautiful a world, and a sin and a sorrow when we did anything to disgrace it." The artist had caught sight of a child's sampler with the words, "Good work lives for ever," and "had taken out his picture and worked at it again, trying hard with that, as with all after-work, to make it better and better, never wholly satisfied with what he had done, and for ever with each new thing he did aiming higher and higher." "It is the simple-hearted folk," says another character in the same story, "pure-lived and pure-thinking, who do well for love of doing well and for love of those about them, that help to make the world beautiful and life sweet." These "Anyhow Stories for Children" were first published in 1882, and in 1889 were reissued with additions. They are hardly fairy tales, but they have a touch of magic and "other-world" fantasy which is delightful. There is philosophy in each story, simply expressed, unforced, and rarely commented upon. That dainty defence of dreaming "Willie and Fancy" appeals to me strongly. "Fancy" led the boy through wonderful lands beyond the stars; but school and work crowded his mind until she had no place. "She had grown small and thin and sad, for she was starved and afraid to whisper to him lest he should tell her that the time for play had passed, and the time for work had come and send her away." The boy says he would like to be a lawyer—"and when Fancy heard that sad word she fled away from him swiftly and for ever." But one day the blacksmith's little daughter, "dreaming over her poetry books, went fast asleep, and Fancy, stealing up to her, crept into her life and held fast to it." And long after, Willie met the blacksmith's daughter—and Fancy made her home with both of them in the old, old fashion. It is a charming allegory, and I mention this book at length because it seems to contain the key to much of Mrs. Clifford's later work.

Cannero, Lago Maggiore,
showing the upper and lower roads. This is where the scene of "Sir George's Objection" was laid.

Perhaps "Mrs. Keith's Crime," which appeared first in two-volume form in 1885 anonymously—Mrs. Clifford has a passion for anonymity—is the best known of the long list of her novels. It proved a success long before the author's name was discovered; but when the fourth edition came some one recognised the handiwork, paragraphs crept into the papers, and the secret was out. This novel appeared serially in *Le Temps*, and was also published in America, where it was diligently pirated. Critically considered, it does not bear comparison with Mrs. Clifford's later work; it is told in the present tense and the first person, and the prolonged soliloquies, the agonies of self-revelation, do not move me. That is the fault of the progress of time; I can well imagine myself having been profoundly affected by this story twenty-five years ago; but we have progressed in our ideas of art since then, and Mrs. Clifford has shown us the measure of that progression by giving us "Miss Fingal" in 1917, which bids fair to be her most famous novel, as it is undoubtedly her finest. It tells of a lonely little lady living in a small flat overlooking Battersea Park—so shy that she had never been inside the park. After eight years, when she is twenty-nine, comes a bolt from the blue: her uncle, who had reminded her of his existence twice a year by sending her a Royal Academy catalogue in summer and a ten-pound note at

Christmas, dies, leaving her wealthy. Her adventures begin; she has not the vaguest idea of what money means, and the average novelist would have hardly resisted the temptation to evolve absurd situations wherein fortune-hunting bachelors might play a part—the stock-in-trade of the lighter kind of stage comedies. Mrs. Clifford, however, is not an "average" novelist. She makes her unsophisticated heroine the central point of a delicate little drama, and the story of her shyness, the slow expansion of her ideas, her love for the two children whom she takes as her own, her quiet discovery of a *grande passion* that she had never imagined possible to herself, is told felicitously and with unfailing skill.

Photo by E. O. Hoppé. **Mrs. W. K. Clifford.**

But there is more in "Miss Fingal" than this. There is a "problem"—a fascinating psychological problem that would have delighted Mrs. Clifford's friend Henry James, concerning Miss Fingal's love for Linda, mother of the two children. Linda is dead, but into the lonely spinster's soul some subtle influence from Linda seems to pass; she opens like a flower, and we realise that no material explanation is sufficient. No wonder that Mrs. Clifford regards this story as her favourite; it is ambitious, and succeeds admirably when a less delicate touch would have ruined the whole conception. It has humour and pathos—especially in one little scene when a deputation of two old women from the inhabitants of the almshouses Miss Fingal has repaired comes to thank her, bringing a posy containing flowers from each garden; a page or two here will remind readers of Thomas Hardy's peasants. Mrs. Clifford was frankly doubtful as to the success of the psychic study in the latter part of this book; so much so, that she sent the proofs to Sir Sidney Colvin and to Professor W. P. Ker, both of whom liked the development immensely and encouraged her to proceed.

Consulting personal taste only, I should place "The House in Marylebone" as second favourite. This also appeared in 1917, and it gives an aspect of London life rarely touched upon. A group of independent business girls, not too well off, forms what one of them calls "a little republic" in Marylebone "diggings," and their joys and loves and sorrows make the book. It is as naturally told as though related from one arm-chair to another in the fire-light; and yet there is some striking characterisation in it. Jerry Findon, the young musician, is most happily suggested by one of the girls as she muses:

> "Jerry must always have been different from every one, must always have seemed as if he were taking up the life that was in the world already, rather than living a new one of his own—the life the sleepers had left; and to be battling with environments they had not known, trying to understand what their aims and messages had been and whither they would lead. That was why he wanted nothing in the shape of rewards or gratifications of personal vanity: she didn't think he had any vanity, only a desire to go on and do his share, earning a little money (as necessary as irksome) by the way. It was why, too, he always seemed so tired; he needed vitality poured into him—fresh life and love."

In these two books Mrs. Clifford's style is at its best; her prose is invariably unstrained and straightforward, but here it attains greater distinction and a dignified ease far beyond the vivid, highly-coloured pages of "Mrs. Keith's Crime."

Every novel of Mrs. Clifford's has been published in America, where she has a very large number of admirers, and "Sir George's Objection" (1910) appeared as "Le Obiezoni di Sir Giorgio" in an Italian review, translated by Emilia Franceschini. The theme of the book is whether a woman should tell her husband's discreditable past when her daughter is about to marry into a good and honourable family; it approaches more nearly the "average" than "Miss Fingal," partly because conventional characters are employed—the charming, innocent girl, the high-spirited boy, the rather stiff, unromantic British father, the slightly *passée* siren who coos and woos and makes eyes and mischief; but in spite of this familiar equipment, the story is powerful and goes with a swing. How finely Mrs. Clifford can present scenery those who have read

"Sir George's Objection" will know; Italy she loves, and I have selected for quotation a passage descriptive of Alassio, from "A Flash of Summer," in this especial connection:

"It is on one side of a bay, as if it had dropped there gracefully and quite by accident; and a little way off—a mile or two, perhaps—is the village of Laigueglia, which might be Alassio's only child keeping respectfully at a distance from its parent. These two have the bay to themselves, and all along the shore are really fine sands, on which the children seek for Venus's slippers, and play among the boats and the brown sails and fishing-nets hung out to dry. Close behind, in a grand semicircle, are the mountains; there is no plain between them and the sea, save the sands and as much ground as is necessary for the little town to stand upon, and there is no visible break in their chain. Besides the sand, and the sea and the mountains, there are the olive woods and the maidenhair valley, and the Banksia roses, and the red berries of the sarsaparilla, and the acacia carubas, which are especially fine, and the palms and the pepper-trees and the oranges that grow thick as apples in Devonshire, and the lemons thriving so well that five millions of them are gathered every year in the district. And there are bits of colour and patches of light, and bells that ring by fits and starts, and clocks that strike at odd moments, and a few well-to-do Italians, and many peasant folks, pleasant to talk with and picturesque to look at—all these, with the sunshine everywhere, make up the beauty of Alassio."

"A Flash of Summer" (1895) is a strong story of a schoolgirl's forced marriage to a man whose evil qualities are perhaps exaggerated but with whom it was impossible for any spirited or decent woman to live. Tormented beyond endurance, she runs away and spends a summer in the sunny South with friends made on the voyage to Genoa, meeting there the man she is to love. In its original form the story is pure tragedy; but in its cheap edition the author, pressed by publishers, gave her heroine a happy issue out of all her troubles; and since other authors have done the same it is not for the critic to complain and talk of art, even though he may feel angry with the publisher!

The cleverest—I do not say the best—of Mrs. Clifford's books is the "Love-letters of a Worldly Woman" (1891). When Mrs. Clifford went to America, all unsuspecting, she found that at least twelve pirated editions were on the book market, and one of them—which I have seen—is a literary curiosity, for it had certain passages marked and was supplied with a gushing prologue by some well-meaning but utterly sentimental American writer. Why the marks were printed is a mystery, for they seem to be inserted with no definite object. The four separate sections of the book are all in the difficult form of letters, managed with great skill and unerring taste. The first, "A Modern Correspondence," appeared in the *Fortnightly Review*, and the book has had three editions in Paris, being translated by M. Henri Davray, of the *Mercure de France*. The whole series is packed with thought, and marvellously true to life; many passages might be quoted if space were available, but I must give only one. "I could tramp gaily, in tatters," says the writer of one letter, "across great plains or over the mountain-tops with a beggar who was a poet, a mechanic who was a genius, a dreamer who talked of a waking-time to come." Mrs. Clifford proves her own genius by the phrase about the mechanic—not one woman in a thousand would have thought of that.

I have left myself too little space to say much of the plays Mrs. Clifford has written—and I must be content with a mere mention of other excellent novels such as "Aunt Anne" (1893), "A Woman Alone" (1901), "Woodside Farm" (1902), and that delightful story of childhood for children, "The Getting Well of Dorothy" (1904). Of the plays, many have been successfully produced. "The Likeness of the Night," after appearing in the *Anglo-Saxon Review* under the editorship of Lady Randolph Churchill, was produced at Liverpool, then at the St. James's Theatre, London, and has since been given by Miss Horniman's accomplished company. It is one of the best of Mrs. Clifford's plays, and shows beyond dispute her mastery of stage-craft. Her favourite, however, is "A Long Duel," suggested by an incident in the life of Meissonier; this has not been staged, though an act of it, as a one-act play, was performed at the Odéon, Paris, unknown to its author. "Hamilton's Second Marriage" was given for a series of matinées at the Court Theatre, and "A Woman Alone" (from the novel of that title) appeared in the *Nineteenth Century* and was produced at the Little Theatre in July, 1914, the run being spoiled, of course, by the outbreak of war. The short play derived from a story entitled "Miss Williamson" was staged by Miss Horniman at Manchester as "The Searchlight," and had a great success.

There are other plays, other stories short and long; but it is not my object to give a catalogue of Mrs. Clifford's work, unedifying and informative. One feels in considering her writings as a whole that something has been achieved that is real and worthy and not ephemeral, and that the latest books from her pen are adding surely to a reputation already thoroughly established. She has had the encouragement and admiration of hosts of friends—men and women known throughout the artistic and literary world; and there is no doubt that her work and her example have encouraged others. She has represented in her books and plays certain aspects of English life which few authors could have dealt with so completely, and although she has not "specialised" on any particular county or district or type she has kept, as a whole, that wonderfully inspiring ideal of work worthily done, of a world beautiful for those who have eyes to see and ears to hear, which tends to give unity in diversity, and makes her readers feel that they are in touch not with a mere teller of stories, but with a remarkably sympathetic personality. And the author, whether of fiction or of more austere literary forms, who conveys that sense of personality, has not missed the finest success of all.

THE POETRY OF THOMAS HARDY.*

By JOHN FREEMAN.

THE publication in one volume of Thomas Hardy's Collected Poems affords a long-desired opportunity of surveying the whole of his work in verse, with the exception of "The Dynasts," within a single pair of covers. And it permits also a retrospect of more than fifty years, since "Wessex Poems," the first of five famous books, although not published until 1898, included many poems dated from the early sixties. Thus on the one hand Hardy's immense productiveness touches the fluent formalism of the Victorian period, and on the other the much-exploring, zestful activity of the latest Georgian poets. At one end he contrasts with Arnold and Tennyson, Browning and Swinburne, Patmore and the Rossettis, and at the other with Rupert Brooke, Edward Thomas and Mr. J. C. Squire. It is a vast and significant orbit, and of itself suffices to confer a distinction upon the present volume secondary only to the intrinsic importance of the poems which it contains. Amid the scores of eminent contemporaries, the blazing and the dying fires, he has remained solitary and uninfluenced. In 1867 he was writing:

Photo by E. O. Hoppé.

Mr. Thomas Hardy.

NEUTRAL TONES.

"We stood by a pond that winter day,
And the sun was white, as though chidden of God,
And a few leaves lay on the starving sod;
They had fallen from an ash, and were gray.

"Your eyes on me were as eyes that rove
Over tedious riddles solved years ago;
And some words played between us to and fro
On, which lost the more by our love.

"The smile on your mouth was the deadest thing
Alive enough to have strength to die;
And a grin of bitterness swept thereby
Like an ominous bird a-wing . . .

Since then, keen lessons that love deceives,
And wrings with wrong, have shaped to me
Your face, and the God-curst sun, and a tree,
And a pond edged with grayish leaves"—

and in the last poem in "Moments of Vision," published in 1917, he writes:

"When the Present has latched its postern behind my tremulous stay,
And the May moth flaps its glad green leaves like wings,
Delicate-filmed as new-spun silk, will the neighbours say,
'He was a man who used to notice such things'?

* * * * *

"If I pass during some nocturnal blackness, mothy and warm,
When the hedgehog travels furtively over the lawn,
One may say, 'He strove that such innocent creatures should come to no harm,
But he could do little for them, and now he is gone.'

"If, when hearing that I have been stilled at last, they stand at the door,
Watching the full-starred heavens that winter sees,
Will this thought rise on those who will meet my face no more,
He was one who had an eye for such mysteries'?

"And will any say when my bell of quittance is heard in the gloom,
And a crossing breeze cuts a pause in its outrollings,
Till they rise again, as they were a new bell's boom,
He hears it not now, but used to notice such things'?"

In these hundreds of lyrics there is both variety and consistency. From first to last the form has developed towards an ever completer comprehensiveness, while the spirit has expressed itself more and more imaginatively and profoundly. If he has learned nothing from others, he has learned everything from himself. You are aware of a gigantic introspectiveness, almost without parallel in English poetry; but closer acquaintance reveals a curious impersonality even in this introspectiveness. He is at once personal and representative. Imagination has worked equally upon thought and sensation, so that these poems become things to be apprehended only with the complete faculties of mind and heart. They are poems for men. Indeed, they are remarkable in yet another aspect. Poetry is so often and so proverbially the gift and preoccupation of youth, that it is not surprising that the larger part of English poetry should be the work of young men. So often has the poet died young, even in the man who has lived long. But Thomas Hardy's work is all adult work, and much of it the work of an old man. Landor and Wordsworth, Browning and Tennyson, wrote when they were old men, but the work by which they are chiefly loved was not their later work. In the main the later work was merely reproductive, adding weight rather than value to their earlier inventions. But in the case of Hardy it is not the later work that would be sacrificed if surrender were inevitable. All his songs are, in Blake's phrase, Songs of Experience; and as experience has accumulated,

* "Collected Poems of Thomas Hardy." With a Portrait. 8s. 6d. net. (Macmillan.)

it has been transmuted by the reflective imagination. And always the artist has been diligent. The earliest of his poems had a new and rare music, often naïve, sometimes uncertain, but still individual and without echoes save of Shakespeare and, though far more infrequently and oddly, of the French writers of triolet and rondeau. Metrically Thomas Hardy's work is of almost equal delight to the simple lover of poetry and that singular contrary person, the prosodist with his innocent-cheating yard-wand. There are hundreds of new forms, scores of enchanting airs, and a few precious masterpieces of musical invention, as:

"And in the night as I lay weak,
As I lay weak,
The leaves a-falling on my cheek,
The red moon low declined—
The ghost of him I'd die to kiss
Rose up and said: 'Ah, tell me this,
Was the child mine, or was it his?
Speak, that I rest may find.'

"O doubt not but I told him then,
I told him then
That I had kept me from all men
Since we joined lips and swore.
Whereat he smiled, and thinned away
As the wind stirred to call up day . . .
——'Tis past! And here alone I stray
Haunting the Western Moor."

He loves rhyme, and uses even its difficulties to enrich his music, yet the simplicities of verse were never more exquisitely expressive than in such a poem as "Unrealised," and almost countless others.

But with all this said, little more has been touched than the formal outskirts of the new and strange land which is the poetry of Thomas Hardy. Of him we may ask, and indeed must ask if we would read him with other than idle mind, What do you mean, see, guess, know? What has the author of "Tess of the D'Urbervilles" and "Jude the Obscure" to express in verse, for the sake of which the prose of so many years was abandoned as a no more useful thing? The answer to such questions is bound to be indirect. We no longer call this poet a pessimist and ask why he is not an optimist. We recognise that with him, as with every original mind, what is called his philosophy is not the sum of the pure, impersonal contemplation of human and natural phenomena, but is far more accurately the expression of character. His attitude in confronting life is not rational but temperamental. It is character and not reason that gives the bias, and of this simple axiom Hardy's poetry offers abundant illustration. That he uses neutral tones, paints sad landscapes:

"They load the leafless hedge hard by,
And the blades of last year's grass,
While the fallow ploughlands turned up nigh
In raw rolls, clammy and clogging lie—
Too clogging for feet to pass"—

that his incidents are tragic, yet often related ironically, that wife deceives husband, that when the dead revisit mortal haunts they are bitterly grieved or sardonically pleased, that amends are made too late—all these do but represent the effect of human experience upon character. And, too, these things reveal the writer's philosophy at least as clearly as those poems which directly intend its revelation. Moreover, since no honest artist would select certain aspects of life and extend them as the whole of life, it is right to conclude that the microcosm which Hardy offers us in this book —the fruit, it must still be remembered, of more than fifty years' brooding—is indeed a true and full exhibition of inward and outward things as present to his mind. That is to say, his entire sincerity must be immediately conceded, even by those to whom his world appears disagreeable. His philosophy (if the term may still pass) may be granted as truly his, and yet rejected as being true for him but not for oneself and one's different temperament. Even his wildest and grimmest fantasies must be accepted as temperamentally true. Take, for example, a mocking poem such as "Ah, are you digging on my grave."

"'Ah, are you digging on my grave
My beloved one?—planting rue?'
—'No: yesterday he went to wed
One of the brightest wealth has bred.
'It cannot hurt her now,' he said,
That I should not be true.'"

It is not the happy widower; it is not the "nearest dearest kin," nor her late enemy, but "your little dog, who still lies near"; but when she praises the dog's fidelity, he alone of all things living still faithful to her memory, she is answered:

"Mistress, I dug upon your grave
To bury a bone, in case
I should be hungry near this spot
When passing on my daily trot.
I am sorry, but I quite forgot
It was your resting-place."

If wryness may seem to have dictated this, something perhaps sourer embitters the "Satires of Circumstance in Fifteen Glimpses." In these Hardy is attempting a skeleton poetry, without fleshly clothing or natural movement, and the starkness does not aid in credibility. One may even be driven to resentment. "The Statue of Liberty," for example, recites the questions of a sculptor who sees a man scrubbing the statue devoutly; praised for his pious work for Liberty, the cleaner answers that he cares not for Liberty, but does his humble task in memory of his daughter—"fairest and rarest"—who sat as model for the statue, and died in the town:

"In love of the fame of her,
And the good name of her,
I do this for her sake.

"Answer I gave not—of that form
The carver was I at his side;
His child, my model, held so saintly,
Grand in feature,
Gross in nature,
In the dens of vice had died."

The same untowardness in human affairs—the general theme of all his work, in verse or prose—is more effectively rendered when a sly humour leavens the helplessness; and sly humour is conspicuous among Hardy's gifts. Wanting this, his subjects are often of an intolerable rawness, and the ingenuity with which a new form, a difficult stanza, is fashioned for them does but make that rawness a little more sharply-edged, and the self-possession of the artist almost

amazing. Cynicism there is not, but an inverted humour, deepening rather than sweetening the sense of haplessness. It is the detached, even the remote spectator who speaks now and then; and indeed Hardy has a fondness for the vast aerial surveys which fell so easily into the great scheme of "The Dynasts":

"What were the infinite spectacles featuring foremost
Under my sight,
Hindering me to discern my paced advancement
Lengthening to miles;
What were the re-creations killing the daytime
As by the night?"

All these, it must be repeated, are to be accepted as true for their author, being written out of his temperament; and if we do not find them true for ourselves, if the world of our experience, inward and outward, is not strewn with statues of liberty and desolate with circumstantial satires, we may yet receive them for the increase of our sense of the originality, the variety and the sensitiveness of the mind of their author.

—The mind of their author. There is the ultimate fascination of these poems. Their lyrical qualities are great and in certain respects unique, but it is when these qualities are most freely felt in the expression of Hardy's own personality that they excite the deepest admiration. That is a value which they share with Shakespeare's sonnets and with Donne. Through these poems the mind of the author rises as stone whitens through green turf. The stone is shaped by centuries of change, by elemental influences. And the mind of Thomas Hardy, shown in these Collected Poems more sharply than in all the novels, rises solid out of English earth, shaped by the same elemental influences and ancestral forces, by ancient paganism and by the stealthy wave of modern science.

THE BOOKMAN PRIZE COMPETITIONS.

JANUARY, 1920.

Answers to these competitions (each on a separate sheet bearing the name and address of the sender) should be forwarded not later than the 14th of the month to

"The Prize Page," THE BOOKMAN, Messrs. Hodder & Stoughton, Ltd., Warwick Square, E.C.4.

Colonial and foreign readers please note that Competitions II., IV. and V. are the same each month, and that for the next two months the first prize will be for the best original lyric.

SPECIAL NOTICE.—*Competitors must please keep copies of their verses; the Editor cannot undertake to return them.*

I.—A PRIZE OF ONE GUINEA is offered for the best *original* lyric.

II.—A PRIZE OF HALF A GUINEA is offered for the best quotation from English verse applicable to any review or the name of any author or book appearing in this number of THE BOOKMAN. Preference will be given to quotations of a humorous nature.

III.—A PRIZE OF THREE NEW BOOKS is offered for the best answer in not more than a hundred words to the question: If you had Aladdin's Lamp what is the first wish you would gratify?

IV.—A PRIZE OF HALF A GUINEA is offered for the best review, in not more than one hundred words, of any recently published book. Competitors should give the names of Authors and Publishers at head of reviw.

From "London Men in Palestine" (Edward Arnold), Captain H Rowlands S. Coldicott's graphic and spirited story of his experiences of war in the Holy Land.

V.—A copy of THE BOOKMAN will be sent *post free* for *twelve months* to the sender of the best suggestion for THE BOOKMAN Competitions. The Editor reserves the right to use any suggestion submitted.

RESULTS OF COMPETITIONS FOR NOVEMBER—DECEMBER.

I.—The PRIZE OF ONE GUINEA is divided, and HALF A GUINEA each awarded to S. M. Isaacson, of 16, Lexham Gardens, W.8., and Eileen Newton, of White Haven, Whitby, Yorks, for the following :

1917.

I never knew,
Until this hour, just what I meant to you ;
I knew a brave and steadfast love was mine,
But what the measure of that love might be
I never knew,
Until you died for me.

I never thought,
Nor could perceive, that I excelled in aught
Save only, dearest, in your loving eyes.
Henceforth I rate myself less modestly
As one dear-bought,
Since you have died for me.

I never cared,
O'er greatly, how the world around us fared ;
Secure within the shelter of your heart.
Now will I live for all, in memory
Of all you dared
Before you died for me.

I never guessed
What wealth was mine, that you should love me best ;
Until I came to face the world alone
And marvel mutely in what great degree
I have been blessed
That you should die for me.

Oh, you who went
Beyond, with fearless gaze and head unbent,
And would not wait for me, since England called,
Be near me ever, till once more I see
And join, content,
My love who died for me.

S. M. ISAACSON.

CONVEYANCE.

WHEREAS . . . AND WHEREAS . . . records the quill,
And the clerk's brown head bends low
To catch the last reluctant ray
Of the wild, implacable winter's day,
That is ending now in a flurry of snow.
Close is the room, and still.

NOW THIS INDENTURE WITNESSETH . . .
But he dreams of the blackbird's tune,
Of buds that break in a sunlit space,
Of the flower-soft curves of a girl's fair face
That is one with the glamour and glow of June,
With bird-song and lilac-breath.

BOUNDED . . . ON OR TOWARDS THE EAST . . .
" Gold, red-gold, is her hair,
And blue are her eyes as those far blue hills . . . "
(They are but the drafts of dead men's wills,
By the old black box in the corner there
Of R. J. Barry, deceased.)

TO HOLD. . . . Ah ! June, with your songs and scents,
Loose hold of the young clerk's hand !
For the face of his holiday-love has fled ;
In the dust of the Law, Romance lies dead,
And its tomb is a PIECE OR PARCEL OF LAND
And the HEREDITAMENTS. EILEEN NEWTON.

We also select for printing :

RELEASE.

Your face is quiet now, your thin hands stilled,
That gripped and wandered in their agony ;
And hushed for ever your dear voice that strove
Through all your pain for words to comfort me.

And I have tried to hide my tears and smile,
Lest you should grieve to see my misery.
Now, God be praised, dear, you are safe from pain,
And I can weep, and weep, with none to see.

(Minna Browning, Strathcona, St. John's, Cheltenham.)

From the very large number of lyrics received we select for special commendation the thirty by Molly Fogerty (Oxford), H. J. Hann (Weston-super-Mare), Alice Doris Moorhouse (Birmingham), G. Lawrence Groom (London, N.), Rachel Bates (Great Crosby), Cyril G. Taylor (Edinburgh), Gilbert Coleridge (London, S.W.), Vivienne Dayrell (London, N.W.), Mary C. Mair (Guildford), R. Scott Frayn (Altrincham), Malcolm Hemphrey (Farnborough), Ivan Adair (Dublin), Elinor M. Dyer (South Shields), Alice M. Linford (London, N.), Dorothy Stanford (London, N.W.), M. E. Morris (Torquay), Julia Wickham Greenwood (Gibraltar), A. Muir (Glasgow), Helen Mitcham (Limehouse), E. (Highgate), Margaret Hill (Southampton), Margaret Douglas (Scarborough), A. Violet Gandy (Bath), B. Ionides (Hove), Mary Kent (Holloway), Eunice Fuller (Caen), Alice Hopkinson (Cambridge), Cyril Bertram (Taunton), Dorothy Bowers (Monmouth), Jeffery Kitley (Derby), E. R. L. (Durham).

II.—The PRIZE OF HALF A GUINEA for the best quotation is awarded to the Rev. Edwin C. Lansdown, of 33, Hartfield Road, Eastbourne, for the following :

THE TURNING POINT. BY EDWARD LEWIS.
(Sampson Low.)

" Her slender nose
Tip-tilted like the petal of a flower ! "
TENNYSON, *Gareth and Lynette.*

We also select for quotation :

BIRD BEHAVIOUR. BY FRANK FINN, F.Z.S.
(Hutchinson.)

" The maid was in the garden, hanging out the clothes,
Down flew a blackbird and snapped off her nose."
Nursery Rhyme.

(Mariquita Gutièrrez, 25, Paseo de la Concha, San Sebastian, (Guipuzcoa) Spain, and Captain W. L. Dudley, Garrison Headquarters, Pembroke Dock.)

THE REVOLT OF YOUTH. BY CORALIE HOBSON.
(Werner Laurie.)

" And the moral which they taught, I
Well remember. Thus they said :
' Little boys, when they are naughty,
Must be whipped and sent to bed.' "
THOS. BARHAM, *Ingoldsby Legends.*

(Queenie Scott-Hopper, 25, The Crescent, Whitley Bay.)

DRESSING GOWNS AND GLUE.
BY CAPTAIN L. DE G. SIEVEKING, D.S.O.
(Cecil Palmer & Hayward.)

" Here's a pretty mess."
W. S. GILBERT, *Mikado.*

(Jessie Hallit, 9, Ashfield Road, Birkby, Huddersfield, and Ada Emily Smith, 63, Fairfield Street, Wandsworth, S.W.18.)

III.—The PRIZE of THREE NEW BOOKS for the best brief motto for the New Year is awarded to Percy Allott, of St. Michael's House, Basinghall Street, E.C.2, for the following :

" I do the very best I know how : the very best I can : and I mean to keep doing so until the end."
—ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

We select for special commendation the twelve original or selected mottoes by M. A. Hopkins (Bath), Miss

Hood (Christiana), M. A. Lotz (Wimbledon Common), Rev. Clement E. Newcomb (Kidderminster), F. Webster (Walworth), Albert Edwards (Oldham), Robert C. Bodker (Streatham Hill), Winifred Watson (Ilfracombe), Kate Johnson (Bradford), Kathleen Blyth (West Hartlepool), John E. Clements (Manchester), Alfred Green (Skipton).

IV.—The PRIZE OF HALF A GUINEA for the best review in not more than a hundred words is awarded to L. Mugford, of 19, Cecil Court, S.W.10, for the following:

YASHKA. By MARIA BOTCHKAREVA. (Constable.)

Maria Botchkareva must be dowered with a very tough body in addition to her strength of soul—for no other cast of woman could have emerged sane from such persistence of toil, ill-usage, lack of physical comfort and disillusion of spirit, as this peasant endured. It is an amazing narrative—with no great literary distinction, but compelling by its human interest. One realises with her that it will need an unusually strong shepherd to extricate the Russian flock—for easily-swayed sheep these Slavs seem—from the shifty morass in which it now struggles.

We also select for printing:

AN AWFULLY BIG ADVENTURE. By "BARTIMEUS." (Cassell.)

This is more than a book of adventure stories. It suggests a philosophy of adventure. Adventuring with children we strike the adventure of love. Adventuring with lovers we storm the shot-raked mole at Ostend. Yet Mouldy Jakes the hero was "no adventurer by nature." Then follow Q-boat adventures with submarines. The war atmosphere vanishes and we are standing on a peak in the Maritime Alps in pre-war days. Is the old world to give earnest of the new? One thing remains and the priest realised it gazing upward to the peak. ". . . The adventure—the brave adventure."

(T. F. Harkness Graham, Manse of Cadzow, Hamilton, Scotland.)

IRISH IMPRESSIONS. By G. K. CHESTERTON. (Collins.)

These reflections on Ireland and the Irish are marked by the vision and poetry, and the wit and humour we associate with Chesterton, and they should be widely read, not only for their literary brilliancy, but for the author's arresting statement on the burning Irish question, which may yet dig the grave of England's reputation abroad. Many readers will hotly repudiate G. K.'s scathing criticism of England's conduct towards Ireland, and deride the Chestertonian point of view, but surely few will quarrel with his vision of Erin as a nation of peasant proprietors, living peacefully and contentedly as their own masters.

(Sidney S. Wright, 12, Swanley Lane, Swanley, Kent.)

A THIN GHOST AND OTHERS.
By MONTAGUE RHODES JAMES, Litt.D. (Arnold.)

Attempts to create the gruesome in literature too often result in works of mere childishness and boredom, but Dr. James has grasped the essential that it is the skilful suggestion of the uncanny that grips the reader and that detailed description dispels all illusion. Although none of these five short tales can compare either in title or technique with such of his former masterpieces as "The Scrap-Book of Canon Alberic," many a fireside will enjoy Christmas all the more for the thrills received from "An Episode of Cathedral History"—the best in our opinion—and the accompanying stories.

(B. Webb, The Oratory School, Birmingham.)

AN ENGLISH COURSE FOR SCHOOLS.
By S. P. B. MAIS. (Grant Richards.)

"And a guide for those who have left school" might well have been added as a sub-title to this stimulating and freshly-written book. It is compiled for "the boy and girl of average ability," but, except with the help of the teacher, its value would be fully appreciated only by the scholar well in his teens. The adult will find abundant joy in its pregnant pages. At least one reader well past school age and jaded by five years of stress has won from them a new enthusiasm for English and English literature, and will peruse them many times.

(Vincent Hamson, 111, Dallow Road, Luton.)

We select for special commendation the twenty reviews sent by E. M. Liddell (Chepstow), Florence G. Fidler (London, W.), M. K. Boothby (Scarborough), Sub-Lieutenant Gillett, R.N. (H.M.S. *Coventry*), Mrs. J. A. (Hampstead), Winifred Bates (Bridport), J. A. Jenkins (Liverpool), K. Gordon Brown (Glasgow), Rolanda Hirst (Bedwas), Mrs. Kirkland Vesey (Glenfarg), A. E. Gowers (Haverhill), G. M. Field (London, S.W.), Annie Pearson (Halifax), M. B. (Stowmarket), Ruth Bevan (Bude), M. E. Rotton (London, N.W.), Kathleen W. Coales (Market Harborough), B. Noel Saxelby (Manchester), Gladys M. E. Leigh (West Bromwich), Daisy Underwood (Ealing).

V.—The PRIZE OF ONE YEAR'S SUBSCRIPTION TO THE BOOKMAN is awarded to Gwendolen Leijonhufvud, of Wyuna, Bournemouth West.

THE POETRY OF RUDYARD KIPLING.*

By R. ELLIS ROBERTS.

ONE of the best known and least observed of critical rules is that you should never condemn a work of art for not being something which it evidently does not attempt to be. It is legitimate to argue that the "mixed" tragedy of Shakespeare, which permits the Porter-scene in "Macbeth," is an inferior form of art to that of Sophocles or Racine; but it is silly to complain of the lack of incident in Wordsworth's Ode on Intimations of Immortality. Its admirers are as unvexed as were those of the elephant when the jaundiced ones turned down that king of beasts because of his failure to rival the colour or the progression of the silver pheasant. Latterly Mr. Kipling has had a great deal of this criticism. People have attacked him without considering what kind of a poet he is, what kind of work he is trying to do. It is open to you to say that you dislike all political, dramatic, gnomic and dialect poetry—if you do, leave these handsome volumes alone; but do not take the volumes and then complain bitterly that they are full of qualities which are inevitable in the very nature of the task attempted.

The greatest and gravest fault in Mr. Kipling's critics is, I think, their refusal to recognise his superb dramatic quality. It is a thing very rare in poets. Leaving out the dramatists who wrote in verse, how few English poets there are who give us individuals, who really present character. Chaucer stands alone. There are passages in Dryden and Pope, a fierce, half-finished etching or two in Donne, and some masterly work in

* "The Poems of Rudyard Kipling." 3 vols. £3 3s. net. (Hodder & Stoughton.)

Cowper and Crabbe. Then comes Browning—for neither Scott nor Byron can claim to do anything but present romantic types. After Browning, again, who is there but Mr. Hardy and Mr. Kipling? If Mr. Kipling cannot be compared with Mr. Hardy for depth of feeling, or singleness of vision, he has invented in his verse, as in his prose, a range of characters of greater richness, with more various idiosyncrasies than has any poet since Browning. Take the series of "Barrack-room Ballads," first published in the volume of that name, and in "The Seven Seas": in those brief, economic, pitiful, humorous, tender or savage poems you have a series of portraits whose competence and craftmanship appear to me indisputable. It has been said that all art should make pictures: and does any living poet make a picture quite so certainly as Mr. Kipling? You may not like the picture—just as you may dislike the "Capriccios" of Goya; but you must not ride away with your dislike as a flaming principle, which yet allows you to praise the poetry of Mr. Masefield and Mr. Chesterton, or of Mr. Vachel Lindsay, the latest men of genius to use Mr. Kipling wisely and well. The use of slang in the "Barrack-room Ballads" and in such a poem as the amazing "Ballad of the Bolivar," was a source of vexation to some of the poet's earlier critics. Even the *National Observer* had to comment on it as something which needed defence. To me it seems on a par with the use of dialect. If you admit the dialect of Burns, and Barnes, or in Shakespeare and Hardy, I can see no reason against allowing slang, when it is dramatically appropriate. It is this dramatic propriety which is frequently attacked in Mr. Kipling. I do not mean that a critic can draw no deductions from an author's characters and choice of subjects as to the author's own predilections. Mr. Kipling's prejudices are obvious enough. But I think that it is often forgotten how much Mr. Kipling represents, in his methods, the people for whom he is speaking. If you took at full value the soldier-songs of the war—not the poems, nor the bad verses written by good patriots to be roared at music halls, but the songs that the soldier actually sang, you would have a very odd idea of the British soldier's pluck and patriotism. That great ballad, "O! my! I don't want to die! I want to go home!" was sung tumultuously, with a luxurious melancholy, by men who would have died sooner than go home. It represented, in short, a truth of mood; it was a kind of swearing—how horrible it would be if every man who ever said "Damn you" really meant that he wished to see his enemy writhing in hell-fire. Now Mr. Kipling's poems are full of the truth of mood. He says, and makes his heroes say, precisely what they feel at the moment: and so you may get two poems which treat of the same subject in veins violently contradictory, such as "Mary, Pity Women!" and "The Ladies." And I do not see why Mr. Kipling should be charged with insincerity in either poem any more than Shakespeare whose writing of love ranges from the passion of "Romeo and Juliet" to the cynicism of "Troilus and Cressida." Or again when Mr. Kipling makes his service man declare:

> "But now, discharged, I fall away
> To do with little things again . . .
> Gawd, 'oo knows all I cannot say,
> Look after me in Thamesfontein!
>
> 'If England was what England seems
> An' not the England of our dreams,
> But only putty, brass, an' paint,
> 'Ow quick we'd chuck 'er! *But she ain't!*"—

his critics declaim against a patriotism so conditioned, although it would not seem to differ in spirit from that of those who insist on the duty of admitting one's country's faults. If you once admit the validity of any criticism of your fatherland, you must grant Mr. Kipling the same licence you allow Mr. Bertrand Russell. This brings us to the political side of Mr. Kipling's verse, I write as one who disagrees with nearly all Mr. Kipling's expressed political views, and detest (as a politician) most of his political verse. I do not think that any one, however ardently he agreed with Mr. Kipling's attitude, would agree that he was at his best in the political verse. It falls into rhetoric, into commonplace, into abuse far too easily; but, putting politics aside, there are some poems of this class which seem to me far better than most "patriotic" verse. There is beauty and breadth, rhetorical but not false nor pompous, in "The English Flag"; and, while little can be said about such poems as "The Old Issue" or "The Islanders," what poem with a national bias can compare for dignity or wisdom with "The Recessional"? And no one who loves English country can fail to respond to the colour and love of the poems in "Puck of Pook's Hill."

Of the outstanding features of Mr. Kipling's poetry the most remarkable—and it is true of his prose too—is his feeling for words. He loves words as a jeweller loves stones. He has an unerring eye for the only word, and an incredible skill in setting it. In a day of idle workers, of careless, slipshod authors, Mr. Kipling keeps up a standard of actual writing, of pure craftmanship, which is, in its way, as vigorous, as exacting, as full of discipline as Pater's style. Indeed, in a real sense, Mr. Kipling is the last and greatest of the æsthetes. He cannot resist a phrase. Take a simple poem, a poem in which few words are used, "Ford o' Kabul River," and analyse its language: can one condemn the art which has produced, with such a simplicity, so poignant an effect? In more luxuriant moments Mr. Kipling is over indulgent. I rather like his mediæval moments when he riots in a heaven peopled by subalterns and Rubens archangels, with a row of pale, rather frightened Blake-like figures, burning like flames, in the background; but there is no doubt that most readers find the adventures on "the rein of a red-maned star" a trifle temerarious. In these poems what one chiefly admired and admires is the sheer gusto, the gaiety of youth, the gallant audacity which is prepared to attempt in verse the same decorative effects which Flemish and Italian artists achieved in paint. It is natural that in his later work this exuberance has been curbed: yet with the more sober mood has come no lessening of strength when the poet really feels and conveys his feeling in a poem continually satisfying. Prejudice may seek to discount the value of many of the more recent poems; but it seems to me a sheer refusal of truth to recognise the beauty and force, the reticence and vision of several of the Epitaphs.

Inevitably the melody and the tone of the Greek anthology are recalled to the reader who meets such a gem as "The Beginner":

"On the first hour of the first day
In the front trench I fell.
(Children in boxes at a play
Stand up to watch it well)"—

or the even more heartrending "The Coward":

"I could not look on Death,
which being known,
Men led me to him, blind-
fold and alone."

And is there any modern English poem which would more easily slip into a collection of old ballads, and seem not at all out of place than "My Boy Jack"?

"'Have you news of my
boy Jack?'
Not this tide.
'When d'you think that
he'll come back?'
*Not with this wind blow-
ing, and this tide.*

"'Has any one else had word
of him?'
Not this tide.
*For what is sunk will
hardly swim*
*Not with this wind blow-
ing, and this tide.*

"'Oh, dear, what comfort
can I find?'
None this tide
Nor any tide
*Except he did not shame
his kind—*
*Not even with this wind
blowing, and that
tide.*

"'*Then hold your head up all the more,*
This tide,
And every tide;
Because he was the son you bore
And gave to that wind blowing and that tide!'"

Photo by E. O. Hoppé.

Mr. Rudyard Kipling.

It may be indeed that by his ballads Kipling as poet will chiefly live: and it is a high promise. For the ballad-singer, more than most poets, is the reed for the life of the race, and his music is the echo of the deep, unheard music of the people. It is not that it is less personal than other poetry, but that ballad poetry touches the universal aspects of the things which make for every person the colour, the charm, the agony and the terror of life. The things the ballad-maker sings are simple things, and he must sing them simply; and here Mr. Kipling has restored the old tradition of extremely plain, biblical speech which was rather lost during the time when the Pre-Raphaelites pursued a more conscious and mannered style. In spite of all his virtuosity, Mr. Kipling has always remained perfectly simple in his poetry: when the meaning is obscure it is the result of a certain lack of intensity: he has been writing with his head rather than with his heart. Never when he has felt and meant his subject does he fail from that straightforward, intense statement which is the mark of the really essential poet. And there are a few poems —"Sussex" and "The Flowers" are the supreme examples—in which the poet restores for us that early, surprised emotion of joy in lyric beauty, that sense of unaware discovery which overcame the first reader of Elizabethan song-books, of Burns, or of the Lyrical Ballads.

ST. JOHN ERVINE.

BY LOUIS J. MCQUILLAND.

WHATEVER the political and religious prejudices of Ulster, its fiction and drama have for some fifteen years past given evidence of a spirit which rises over party bickerings. The Ulster Literary Theatre was instituted in Belfast in 1904 with a poetic drama, "Brian of Banba," by Bulmer Hobson, and a satire on municipal politics, "The Reformer," by Lewis Purcell. It was at this time that the magazine *Uladh* appeared which contained plays from the repertoire of the theatre, such as "The Little Cowherd of Slainge," a dramatic legend by Joseph Campbell. Hobson and Purcell were members of the Belfast Protestant Nationalist Society, and Joseph Campbell was a Roman Catholic poet.

Purcell's next play, "The Enthusiasts," was more ambitious in its scope than "The Reformers." It was followed, in 1906, on the stage, by "The Pagan," an adventurous attempt to build a comedy round the conflicts between Christians and Pagans in the Ireland of the sixteenth century. In the same year appeared Mr. Rutherford Mayne's serious comedy, "The Turn of the Road." In the direction of farce, the Ulster Literary Theatre produced "Gerald MacNamara's delicious extravaganza, "Thompson in Tir-na-n'Og,"

being the adventures of an Orangeman in the Celtic fairyland, and "When the Mist Does Be On the Bog," an irresistible travesty on Synge.

Later came Rutherford Mayne's "The Drone," and "Red Turf," racy of the soil. In Ulster Rutherford Mayne is still considered its leading playwright, but Mr. St. John Ervine, another native of the north-east corner, has gained the plaudits of England and America, especially with "John Ferguson," which has aroused the United States to enthusiasm. Before dealing with this play or any other work of St. John Ervine's, I think it well to begin at the beginning, and tell of Ervine's career.

The most successful playwright and novelist Ulster has produced in our time was born in Belfast in 1883. His father was a printer from whom he inherited a love of literature. He was an omnivorous reader from infancy, and began to write at a precociously youthful age. At the age of seventeen he left the Ulster capital and came to the English one. He obtained work in an insurance company, but filled in all his spare hours with writing. In course of time he became a contributor to the *Daily News*, the *Manchester Guardian* and *The Nation*. Like all Irishmen, he has been unable to escape a deep preoccupation with politics, and that preoccupation is seen in all his work. In his salad days, St. John Ervine was a member of that famous debating centre, the West London Parliament, and discussed all the questions of the day. He sat at that time on the Socialist benches. There was no distinctive Irish group in the Society. The keen young men with whom he sat were members of the Fabian nursery, who respected the Webbs, admired Wells, enjoyed Chesterton, and worshipped George Bernard Shaw. At that time Ervine looked much as he does to-day, slightly built, with fair, curly hair and a somewhat reserved manner. He had no Celtic fervour in his speeches, but was a close reasoner with crisp, succinct arguments to back up whatever advanced or lost cause he was battling for. I have not the faintest doubt that the loosening of his tongue caused by these discussions and the necessity for compression in the speeches according to the rules of debate were factors in his success as a novelist and playwright. Mr. Ervine got married when he was twenty-eight.

His first play was "The Magnanimous Lover," which Mr. William Butler Yeats thought highly of. He called it "a piece of wayward realism." Mr. Ervine has no illusions about that play, which he has since termed "a crude and violent thing." His second play was "Mixed Marriage" (produced before "The Magnanimous Lover"). He loves it most of his plays, though he admits it was "a clumsily contrived thing." It will be noticed that Mr. Ervine is his own severest critic.

The next play was "Jane Clegg," done by Miss Horniman at the Gaiety Theatre, Manchester; and then came "John Ferguson" which was first performed at the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, and was afterwards put on for a week at the Repertory Theatre, Liverpool. During the performance there, the player who took the name-part fell sick at the end of the first act. A brief panic ensued, in the midst of which Ervine was suddenly hauled out of the bar of the theatre, thrust into the actor's clothes, hurriedly "made-up," and sent on to the stage to play the part of John Ferguson, although, surprising to relate, he did not remember a word of it. He played the part three times and became astonishingly ingenious in hiding the book of the play. This piece, "John Ferguson," has an odd history. It was written in the three months immediately succeeding the outbreak of war, and offered to the Abbey Theatre. The author made conditions as to its production which Yeats refused to concede. Ervine was very angry about this refusal, which, with his usual magnanimity, he now considers was justified; and he withdrew the play from the Abbey.

In the course of conversation Mr. St. John Ervine told me of his surprise when one night Sir George Alexander rang him up, and asked if he had a play that he could produce at once. "I said 'No,'" explained Ervine, "but that I'd like him to read 'John Ferguson.' I sent it to him, and he liked it so much that he proposed to do it at the St. James's with himself in the title-rôle. You can imagine that suave and charming actor as a rough Ulster farmer!" On second thoughts Sir George withdrew his offer because the play was a tragedy, and he did not think that a gloomy play would draw audiences in war time. In its place he produced three "popular" pieces, one after the other, all of which were financial failures. Then the play remained dormant until Yeats asked Ervine to become manager of the Abbey Theatre for a couple of months until he could find some one to take the place of the previous manager.

Ervine went over to Dublin, produced his play and remained at the Abbey for eight months. It was a period of excursions and alarums and many pitched battles. Mr. Ervine was too drastic in his methods for the easygoing Irish players. His initial handicap was that he was an Ulsterman. The Dubliners despise Belfastmen as Philistines and hustlers; the Belfastmen despise the Dubliners as talkers and dreamers. This is not a conflict of theological and political outcome. In Ireland, as in every other country, there is a sharp dividing line in the temperament of the North and the South. In any event, however, even a Leinster archangel would not have established peace in the Abbey Theatre. I have met its principal players. They are clever, witty, charming and delightful, but they are full of artistic jealousies. The same of course applies to the distinguished *illuminati* of the Comedie Française.

At the end of eight months of trial Ervine returned to England, wrote his most ambitious novel, "Changing Winds," and enlisted in the Household Battalion. "John Ferguson" appeared to have petered out, so far as the theatre was concerned. Then an unexpected thrill came.

"I was living in Devonshire at a fishing village called Beer (the scene of much of 'Changing Winds')," said Ervine to the present writer, "when I received a telegram from New York asking for permission to produce 'Ferguson' at the Garrick Theatre in that city. The war was then over. I agreed to the Theatre Guild people doing the play, and expected to hear in due course that it had been a financial failure, and that the total amount of royalties due to me was one shilling and ninepence. Instead of this, the play was an enormous success. It ran through the hot weather, and was performed for twenty-five weeks in New York, and there are now two companies on tour in America with it. It is to be produced by Nigel Playfair and Arnold Bennett at the

Lyric Opera House, Hammersmith, about February, when 'Abraham Lincoln' at last consents to withdraw."

During the war, Ervine, after serving as a trooper in the Household Cavalry, saw service in France as an officer in the Dublin Fusiliers from October, 1917, to May, 1918, when he was badly wounded, the result being the loss of a leg—but not of his style.

For a paper like THE BOOKMAN, Mr. Ervine's first claim is as a novelist. He has written the best Ulster novel in dialect I have yet encountered in "Mrs. Martin's Man." As an exile from the north-east corner, I know the types he describes, and can vouch for their truth. Dialect is often a wearisome business, but St. John Ervine has made it subsidiary to his characterisation. It occurs to one that this could be their only method of expression. If Anglicised the talk in "Mrs. Martin's Man" would lose all its "tang," and very much of its force. The novel shows intense powers of observation, and the keenest psychological analysis. The story is that of a strong, simple woman with a hopelessly bad husband, a drunkard and a philanderer. She bears with him, even when he is unbearable, and is relieved when he forsakes her, even though her sister betrays her. Her boy grows up intolerant of his mother, and her womenkind take the same line, despising her weakness. They are all "set upon" themselves. In Mrs. Martin, however, there are great reserves of strength, and the time comes when she puts down her foot and rules her own household on her craven husband's return. She resents most of all the selfish conceit of her son, who has tried to rule the roost and dominate his mother. Mrs. Martin speaks:

Mr. St. John Ervine.

"'Your da's drunk,' she said to Jamesy. 'Well, who's hurt the most by that? Not you, not Aggie, not Esther, but me. I'm hurt, not you. But you're not thinkin' of me, none of you! You're thinkin' of yourself. . . . Yes, you are, Jamesy. An' what am I thinkin' of? Aye, indeed, I'd be the poor woman if I was to wander about thinkin' of my troubles an' my pride, an' how I was hurt by this one an' that one. I'm too ould to be hatin' people, Jamesy.

"'All of yous orderin', orderin', orderin', and never askin' my leave. Well, there'll be an end of that, Master James, and your da'll know it, too, when he's sober. I'm the master in my family, an' it's me that decides what's to be done in my house, not you, or your da, or no one. . . .'"

This sounds like low comedy, but it is the strong finish to a squalid tragedy, in which the only cleansing influence is heart-scalded (an Ulsterism) Mrs. Martin.

"Changing Winds" is a mighty good novel about Ulster, but in spite of its strength and vigour, it is not as good a novel as Mr. John Heron Lepper's "The North-East Corner," which deals with the history of two Ulster families about a generation after the Act of Union, and carries on the narrative from the childhood of its characters to their old age. Mr. Lepper's book is a surer study because he keeps to the Ulster soil. In Mr. Ervine's "Changing Winds," which was a contemporary novel, the interest kept shifting between Ireland and England, and the effect was somewhat jerky. "Changing Winds," however, is a quite remarkable book, the work of a thoughtful, earnest artist, who has steadfastly declined to pander to the taste for "stage Irishmen," which has spoiled many good writers, and has utterly undone Mr. George Birmingham as a lasting influence on Irish literature.

I do not like Mr. Ervine's Cockney stories, though they have many admirers. I do not think it is possible for any Irishman to give a phonetic rendering of the speech of Bermondsey or the New Cut. The Ulsterman especially has little faculty for picking up a patois or a dialect as he has the rough emphatic tones of the Scotch—that is, if he is within the Belfast ambit. Ervine's "Alice and a Family" had a marked success. It was clever and witty and sentimental—above everything else sentimental—but sentimentality is not his metier. In "Eight o'Clock and other Studies," a volume of short stories where the Irish dialect of Donegal is contrasted with that of South London, the contrast showed the inherent strength of the Irish medium, and the inherent weakness of the Cockney one.

I fear that Ervine will become so popular as a playwright that he may not have time for fiction; but if he does make leisure in his busy life for novels, he will be doing an immense service to his native province in continuing to present it in its verity to English readers. Mr. W. W. Jacobs, Mr. Pett Ridge and Mr. Edwin Pugh will turn out as many living Cockneys as are desired.

One of the strongest of Ervine's early plays is "Mixed Marriage." It is a wonderful contribution to the proper understanding of the sectional bitterness of the Northern Province. Old John Rainey, a staunch Belfast Protestant, is at heart a sound democrat. He dislikes Roman Catholics; but he dislikes equally the oppression of men, whatever the creeds concerned. Michael O'Hara, a Roman Catholic, asks for Rainey's help in a strike, and has practically persuaded him to the speech that will bind Orangeman and Papist together for fair wages and

decent hours. Before Rainey sets out to convert his fellow Orangemen to his views, he sees his son making love to a Roman Catholic girl, Nora Murray. He declines to make the crucial speech unless his boy, Hughie, gives up Nora, but the young couple will not hear of separation. Rainey's old hatred of Catholicism is revived by this attempted introduction of one of the hatred creed into his family; and at the meeting of strikers he denounces the Papists virulently. As a result sectarian riots follow. The military are called in, and Nora, who has become Hughie's wife, is shot dead. The play terminates on this note of pitiful tragedy.

The play "Jane Clegg" has just such another theme as "Mrs. Martin's Man." Jane Clegg is the strongest character in it. She, too, triumphs over a worthless husband. In this play the sex problem is handled with extraordinary frankness. "John Ferguson" is the best thing Mr. Ervine has done as a dramatist. It embodies all his best qualities—sound construction, living dialogue, and that clash of individualities and temperaments which is the true essence of all drama. John Ferguson, sickly, a mystic, and finding his only hope in life in the Bible, endeavours to mould his family into his interpretation of the Book which he so constantly studies. Sarah Ferguson, his wife, has tenderness in her Christianity, but never attempts to controvert her husband's harsh views.

Their daughter, Hannah, is a fine girl of twenty who possesses some of the good gifts of each parent. There is a mortgage on John Ferguson's farm, held by a grasping bully and sensualist, Henry Witherow. Hannah promises to marry Witherow if he will let the mortgage go; and then she repents of her agreement. She goes to intercede with the man, and returns home in a distracted condition. In her own words, Witherow has "harmed her." Shortly after this Witherow is shot. James Cæsar, a petty creature, who has desired to marry Hannah in spite of her loathing for him, is arrested for the murder. The real culprit, however, is John Ferguson's son Andrew. John struggles hard between his humanity as a father and his rigid Biblical judgment. The latter prevails, and it is with his wish that his son delivers himself up to the authorities. The play ends with John Ferguson reading, as he had done earlier in the play, the passage from Samuel, and David's lament: "Would God I had died for thee, Absolom, my son . . . my son."

"John Ferguson" is a fitting successor to "Abraham Lincoln." All of us who regard literature with reverence will see St. John Ervine's dramatic masterpiece at the Lyric Theatre. As an Ulsterman, and one with a different creed, and perhaps somewhat different political convictions, I am very proud of Ervine's success. He has worked hard for it.

New Books.

THE ONLY MAX.*

Max is so definitely clever, so brilliant in many ways, yet so economical of his gifts and resources, that there is no one in the wide range of literature or art whose works are received by a fairly numerous few with more genuine welcome and happy applause. It is rare for a writer to be complained-of for niggardliness of output; yet it is a true bill against Mr. Beerbohm. Better, though, economy in good things, than such over-supply as has ruined the names and work of many writers. Max is however not expressing himself as fully as he did, when the famous cartoons stamped in permanence the grotesqueries of a time, and the weekly article of dramatic criticism in the *Saturday* was a happiness to gods and men. We fail to see why the present absurd days should not be similarly rewarded. Surely there are eccentricities enough worthy of the pictorial jingle of Max's cap-o'-bells! After all, Mr. Beerbohm knows best, and while he is economical of output he is generous of quality. Every piece of his work has the right finish. Imagination, ingenuity, wit and humour are in everything he writes; he gives us of his best self, with the result that the reader is not let down; but has, within the limits permitted, a fill of enjoyment.

It is part of the humour of his latest book that he should include himself amongst the "Seven Men." Zuleika Dobson, we were informed, caught her style of conversation through happening once to sit at dinner next to Mr. Beerbohm, who is a necessary partner in the incidents and mental atmosphere of the five stories or studies that comprise this book. Without the witness of their writer they would be shadows uncaught; whereas instead they are actualities, fantastic but sufficient. The best comes first, "Enoch Soame": an extraordinarily ingenious invention, with a true, ironical study of a type: the poet, just less than a poet, who reaches for the fruit but grasps only the leaves. He is the instance of a frequent genus. Here is a poem, at once a gem of parody and—a significance, for it shows how ever behind time are the self-styled futurists of any aspect of art. The little incompetent people claim to be boldly in advance, a vanguard; and are, all the while, the faded echoes of their affected grandsires:

> "*Thou art, who hast not been!*
> Pale tunes irresolute
> And traceries of old sounds
> Blown from a rotted flute
> Mingle with noise of cymbals rouged with rust,
> Nor not strange forms and epicene
> Lie bleeding in the dust,
> Being wounded with wounds.
>
> "For this it is
> That in thy counterpart
> Of age-long mockeries
> *Thou hast not been nor art!*"

Is not that just the sort of thing, though somewhat more clever, the posing cliques are penning and mouthing to-day, and will still be doing in 1992 when Enoch Soame makes his predicted and assured reappearance at the British Museum, to discover, according to the gospel of Nupton, that Mr. Beerbohm was a writer of "sumwot labud satire"? This story is the cleverest of the five, conceived with a brilliance of inventiveness and worked out with a constructive skill that makes one feel the inadequacy of English adjectives. For boldness of invention "Maltby and Braxton," Victorian authors of a brief, purple hour, follows a good second. It is the most amusing and withal comically painful ghost-story that I remember. The troubles of Maltby, pursued through his social pleasures at a country house by the wraith of his envious, supplanted rival, is perfect farce, its humour blent with the pathetic. "James Pethel" is a cruel study of a human possibility, a man so bitten with the craze for risks and chances that an added handicap but adds to his zest. Therefore, when he drives his car at a devil's speed through dangerous

* "Seven Men." By Max Beerbohm. 7s. net. (Heinemann.)

places, it quickens the tang of his peculiar satisfaction to have with him human cargo—a sinister touch that shows, if Mr. Beerbohm's humour were not so insistent and abundant, how effectively he might pen an horrific, cruel, cynical book. "James Pethel" makes the smallest appeal of these stories, because its subtlety is the least commingled with the spirit of Max, the satire is less genial. "A. V. Larder," again, is brilliant, with surprise in its tail. The idea is an inspiration, and the working out an example of the infinite capacity for taking pains. The account of the tragic railway journey is a model of artistic completeness. It is almost a relief to pass from this strain of sustained laudation to the episode of "Savonarola Brown." So much gup gets easy adjectives from half-baked reviewers that whole-hearted praise, however justified, is apt to seem untrue. The tragedy of "Savonarola" to which the prose about the late dramatic critic, Mr. Brown, who preferred to visit theatres on second nights, is the framework, is burlesque of bolder, cruder, more frankly laughable sort, than the customary parody of Max. Its object is not apparent; is it Shakespeare or the frequent poetaster who apes the Elizabethan? The tragedy is certainly funny—the stock antics of the crowd, the ornate verse, with the adapted borrowings from Disraeli and Abraham Lincoln, the "business" too reminiscent of Sheridan's "Critic," and the rich flow of mighty characters, that include Dante, Michael Angelo, Francis of Assisi, Benvenuto Cellini, Andrea del Sarto, Pippa passing, the Borgias and the Medici, Leonardo da Vinci, Boccaccio, with the Brethren of the Misericordia chanting a requiem for Francesca da Rimini, and Guelfs and Ghibellines fighting. Excellent clowning, or not much better than that. It is very amusing, but it rather takes from the charm and quality of a book that is characteristic of the wittiest writer of our time.

C. E. LAWRENCE.

RECOLLECTIONS OF SWINBURNE AND MEREDITH.*

It is the exception, not the rule, to find one who having known a great man long and intimately can sit down and tell you anything much about him. Observation and a retentive memory are not common gifts; few can remember, in any detail, incidents or conversations that happened a year ago, and fewer follow Boswell's methodical practice of making a note of such things before they have had time to forget or half forget them.

Mr. Coulson Kernahan's "Swinburne as I Knew Him" and Lady Butcher's "Memories of George Meredith" are among the exceptional books in their kind. Lady Butcher was one of Meredith's friends for forty-one years, first making his acquaintance as a girl of thirteen, when she and the cousin she afterwards married threw stones at his window before daylight and induced him to come out hatless, with "his nightshirt thrust into brown trousers and his bare feet in leather slippers," to climb Box Hill with them and see the sunrise from the top. The graphic detail with which the whole of that early episode is related gives you hope that here is a writer who saw and heard and remembers, and the hope is justified. The sketches of Meredith in middle life and old age are wonderfully vivid and alive, and Lady Butcher supplements her memory with extracts from her diary and a good many interesting letters.

Not less vivid and interesting are Mr. Coulson Kernahan's pictures of "Swinburne as I Knew Him." He shows him by turns erratic, hasty, short-tempered, brusque, charming, kindly, easily pleased and easily displeased, but exquisitely courteous and lovable to those who were happy enough to win his regard. The book is a mine of first-hand anecdotes which throw light on the greatness and weakness of Swinburne's character; Mr. Kernahan is not concerned to hide the faults of his subject nor to exaggerate them; he touches them in frankly but sympathetically, as a necessary part of the portrait he is drawing, and when all is told you can appreciate his saying of Swinburne at the end, as Swinburne had said of Palgrave, "All my memories of him are glad and gracious memories." He is a hero-worshipper none the less because he is not blind to the fact that his hero had amusingly human, unheroic qualities. The scenes he reconstructs, the conversations he recalls are set down easily and naturally, and a few deft descriptive touches bring the slender figure of Swinburne swaying and gesticulating before your eye and his shrill voice sounding in your ear while you read.

There is a diverting chapter which narrates how, by easy and artful stages, Watts Dunton lured Swinburne out of his habit of brandy-drinking into more healthful ways; and whimsical revelations of Watts Dunton's generous, uncritical custom of eulogising nearly everything the poet wrote; for Mr. Kernahan has a shrewd sense of humour and could laugh at the quainter side of that life at "The Pines" without losing any of his admiration for the fineness of Swinburne's personality and the noble friendship for him that actuated Watts Dunton in all his actions. The book makes excellent reading; it contains some hitherto unpublished letters from Swinburne and its sketches and anecdotes are an authentic and permanent addition to our knowledge of one of the great Victorian poets.

* "Swinburne as I Knew Him." By Coulson Kernahan. 5s. net. (John Lane.)—"Memories of George Meredith." By Lady Butcher. 5s. net. Illustrated. (Constable.)

LIFE LAID BARE.*

Greatness manifests itself throughout these books in nearly every chapter. The translation in each case reads with smoothness, colour and conviction; and the results afford the drastic tonic our current literature requires. Mr. Stephen McKenna in an outspoken introduction calls

* "Old People and the Things That Pass." Translated from the Dutch of Louis Couperus by Alexander Teixera de Mattos. 7s. net. (Thornton Butterworth.)—"The Life of a Simple Man." Translated from the French of Emile Guillaumin by Margaret Holden. 7s. net. (Selwyn & Blount.)

M. Emile Guillaumin.
From a pencil drawing by Charles Holden.

"Old People" not only "the greatest novel of the greatest living Dutch writer," but "in conception and treatment one of the world's half-dozen greatest novels." Praise so cordial makes one glow, even in the cool shades of partial opposition, because it comes in this case from a finished artist who is nothing if not sincere. Not content with voicing a personal preference, he gives us a substantiated judgment, and his preface is as interesting as the book itself, which is praise in superlative degree. As for the French book, its value is enhanced by a similar essay from the pen of Mr. Edward Garnett in which he takes a broad survey of the literature of peasant conditions, and establishes M. Guillaumin's book upon a pedestal that is none too high. But comparisons must not be strained, for besides the wide gulf of caste between them, the one book is fiction and the other is not.

Yet it needed courage as well as discernment to issue these books in an English version. With every desire to keep our definitions elastic, it may fairly be questioned if "Old People" answers to the label of "novel" in any strict sense of the word except that it deals with imaginary life. It lacks drama, form, and progression; its emotions are dominated by the fear of disclosures that dribble away; and the effect of the picture is hard and monotonous, though it comes from the hands of a master. Sixty years divide the leading figures and the action, or rather the smothered memory of action—a crime committed a couple of generations ago seven thousand miles away, and it is this "old unhappy far-off thing" which disturbs the smug, phlegmatic surface of a backwater in modern Dutch society. There is nothing to show why the Steyn de Wierts and their entourage should greatly consider the opinion of the outside world; and even so, as if of set purpose, the outside world is excluded from the setting, partly by the frank paganism of most of the characters, and partly by the fact that in their four generations, all living and all intermingled, they are a self-sufficient group. To cheat the threatening revelation of its force, every other senior member seems to be or to become aware of it; and the granddame of ninety has no virtuous halo to lose, for her tropical escapades in the past are almost as frankly recognised as her three marriages. Her doctor, who long ago stifled inquiry, dies with his lips discreetly closed. Her senile lover predeceases her, leaving money to their love-child of sixty; and the sin-stained old soul passes away in the odour of tolerance and lavender. There is no scandal after all, and the curtain goes down on her dilettante of a grandson, deserted by his wife, and beset with a crowd of curious reflections.

"Story, God bless you! I have none to tell, sir." It goes into a flash of intuition or a hint of blackmail, and, as already said, the murder was an Oriental incident over half a century ago. There is no development, no expiation, no remorse, still less a Nemesis of crumbled reputations. Except for a chapter of conventual piety, there is hardly a breath of warm emotion in the book. What with past infidelities, divorces and re-marriages, the tangle of relationship sets a puzzle fit to tax a mathematician, and one would like to see in a second issue, a genealogical tree by way of frontispiece, adorned with all this prolific Dead Sea fruit of troubled consciences. Strange Dutch names add to the burden of the reading, and the Sterne-like *picotage* of style can hardly be said to help us out of difficulties the author delights to emphasise. He out-Conrads Conrad in his contempt for the primary colours of narrative, the mere confectionery of thought. But when all is said and done, the work redeems itself by a stark and ironic intensity, and an intentness of vision that makes the pupils all but ache. If that is not power, then power is a myth. It may not be fiction; it may be the morbid psychology of age, or a satire on smothered conscience, what you will; but genius it is and has, beyond a doubt.

Nor does the French book lose by contrast. After the stagnant emotions mantling on the other work, M. Guillaumin's seems a thing of life, too steady for a film, too active for a panorama. He tells the actual life-story of a Bourbon peasant lad who makes himself, without schooling or anything but hard knocks and harder work, a *métayer* or leasehold farmer, whose offspring are destined to no better fate in their turn, for the very good reason that the hard knocks pursue him to the end. We gather, and Mr. Garnett encourages the view, that the original was the author's father, and the book may have been written some years ago, but at least it brings us from the revolution of Louis Philippe to the war of 1870, and these are only outside events breaking in upon a life of rutted drudgery. Circumscribed as it is, however, this plain career has all the materials of existence, and certain experiences emerge with a realism that gains nothing from grossness or crudity—the sufferings of childhood in poverty, the glow of young romance and even of dalliance in middle age, the fiendish rapacity and insolence of bourgeois landlords, the crushing weight of trust misplaced, and all the penury and misery of rural toil sweetened by content and honest dealing. Why this book has not been "crowned" by the Académie is a mystery, for we have all read many such that are less deserving. It has not the worldly sophistication that marks the Dutch book, and it comes all the nearer nature. Of both we may say that it would be hard to demand anything better as credentials of taste for a young and enterprising firm, so we may heartily cry "Encore!"

J. P. COLLINS.

RUPERT BROOKE AND THE INTELLECTUAL IMAGINATION.*

The legend of Rupert Brooke grows apace, and the world will not lose by its growth. Those who knew him can easily fancy how he himself would have treated this legend, being young and rather impatient; though he would have enjoyed it, he would not have permitted an expression of this enjoyment, but his outspoken sincerity and recoil from the "unreal" would have tempted him to certain caustic comments, which he would not have kept to himself.

Mr. Walter de la Mare is recognised as a poet of delightful fancy. The small volume before us reveals him as a sound critic and a writer of graceful prose. Mr. Walter de la Mare recognises that his author has certain limitations, and pays him the compliment of abstaining from undiscriminating praise. And it is on this account that he succeeds in putting the reader into the right mood for the poetry of Rupert Brooke:

> "His [Rupert Brooke's] was the intellectual imagination possessed in a rare degree. Nothing in his work is more conspicuous than its preoccupation with actual experience, its adventurousness, its daring, its keen curiosity and interest in ideas, its life-giving youthfulness. Nothing in his work is more conspicuous by its absence than reverie, a deep stillness, brcodingness. The children in his poems are few."

Mr. de la Mare's essay is the more interesting because it calls attention to the less known and less praised poems, it just cursorily mentions and excuses the verses which some of us regret, as a pardonable expression of youthful wilfulness. He quotes in full the poem named "Doubts"; the following lines from this poem will serve as a fitting conclusion to this notice:

> "For if the soul be not in place,
> What has laid trouble in her face?
> And sits there nothing wan and wise
> Behind the curtains of her eyes;
> What is it in the self's eclipse,
> Shadows soft, and passingly,
> About the corners of her lips,
> The smile that is essential She?
>
> * * * * *
>
> And if the spirit be not there,
> Why is the fragrance in the hair?"

AUSTIN H. JOHNSON.

* "Rupert Brooke and the Intellectual Imagination." By Walter de la Mare. 2s. 6d. net. (Sidgwick & Jackson.)

ESSAYS IN GAIETY AND GRAVITY.*

Here are four books of essays that we may label, respectively, Agreeable, Amusing, Provocative and Instructive, though without denying to any one of them the right to a share in the other epithets. Thus, agreeable as Mr. Lucas ever is, he rarely fails to be amusing, and instructive, too, in his own pleasant way—you must be an inhumanly knowing person if you rise up from his slightest volume without some curious addition to your information. His present instalment of agreeableness may be called "the old blend"—born in eighteen ninety-something, and still running. No one would wish it different. From speculation on a Phantom Journal that should contain nothing but good and desirable news (of which he gives some highly improbable specimens), he passes on to Borrow, and The Man of Ross, and Waiters, and Epitaphs, and Policemen—strangely omitting to notice that new and terrifying institution, the Female Policeman, of whom I met a long row the other day, near South Kensington, walking so stupendously like the great originals that there was almost an instant need for their presumable skill in First Aid.

Parks, too, come into his story; but why does he call the large water in Richmond Park the "Fen Pond"? I gather, from his expressed desire for a riverside park at Shadwell, that he has omitted to notice a tiny, attractive parklet in a most unattractive neighbourhood, the garden in the Isle of Dogs, just opposite the splendours of Greenwich—a most exciting place to sit in, for, besides all the steamers passing up and down, there are the great sailing barges that come tacking across stream straight at you, only to disappoint you of the anticipated smash by swirling round and dashing off again to the other side.

Of course Mr. Lucas introduces us to some delightful books we knew nothing about before, one of which, Thomas Green's "Extracts from the Diary of a Lover of Literature," I must, on the strength of his description, commend to all our readers and proceed to acquire for myself. Another, "The Elegant Girl," provides him not only with matter for an article, but with some delightful plates, duly reproduced, showing the Girl in various stages of her Elegance. The imaginary Epitaphs in a Country Churchyard are all so quotable that I dare not begin with one lest I go on with the rest. This essay may be specially commended to those who have failed to notice that the charm of Mr. Lucas's cheerful comments on life springs from a fount of irony within. When your ironist has a winning way he is irresistible. Mr. Lucas's description of the Perfect Host and the Perfect Guest touches me nearly, especially his character of the perfect hostess as one who "places by the bed biscuits, matches, and a volume either of O. Henry or Saki, or both." Observe the biscuits. It befalls me to travel often with one whom the Demon of Sudden Hunger will seize in wildly hopeless places, but most of all in strange inns and houses, at the mid-hours of night, when a stealthy forage for sleep-restoring food would certainly arouse the household to an armed pursuit of burglars. Remember, dear hostess, the biscuits—and, to the bedside books (a choice I heartily approve), please add one by E. V. Lucas.

Mr. Jeffery Farnol,
whose new romance, "The Geste of Duke Jocelyn" (Sampson Low) is reviewed in this Number.
From a drawing by Lawrence Stone.

As for Mr. A. A. Milne, I fell in love with him years ago when I bought at a railway bookstall a shilling volume called "Lovers in London" (I have it still) and devoured it with many chuckles. Like Mr. Lucas he is agreeable, but he is more especially amusing. With E. V. L. you often chuckle; with A. A. M. you laugh outright. He has little of Mr. Lucas's unsated curiosity—the curiosity of the eighteenth century Tatler and Spectator, to whom he (Mr. Lucas) is akin—but he (Milne, this time) plays more gaily over the surface of life, and is, I should guess, more inclined to sentiment than to irony. Upon Thermometers, Suburbs, Ponds, Pipes, Daffodils, Goldfish and other national institutions, Mr. Milne will give unfailing delight to you, and to everybody to whom you have the happy thought of sending his volume as a present.

Mr. Massingham is made of sterner stuff. He is provocative—in the best sense, and perhaps a little in the worst. The "Letters to X" are not, like the papers of Mr. Lucas and Mr. Milne, gay fantasias on familiar themes, but highly mannered and individual essays upon recondite forms of literature. Mr. Massingham has plainly a strong and understanding love of books as books and a sound critical appreciation of books as literature. It is delightful to find some one firmly devoted to the best writers in the best editions. Mr. Massingham's reading is wide and his taste pronounced. He has, indeed, the infectious quality that will really help intelligent readers in the proper

* "The Phantom Journal." By E. V. Lucas. 6s. net. (Methuen.)—"Not That It Matters." By A. A. Milne. 6s. net. (Methuen.)—"Letters to X." From H. J. Massingham. 6s. net. (Constable.)—"Criticism at a Venture." By Geraldine E. Hodgson, Litt.D. 10s. 6d. net. (Erskine Macdonald.)

pursuit of literature; but he has also the self-imposed handicap of a fantastic and unfluent style. Not for nothing does high praise of Henry James appear so often in his pages. I beseech him to admire Henry James as much as he will, but to regard the Jacobean influence as deadly in his own prose. Do readers really like this sort of thing? I know one who doesn't:

"You who have often peered over the rim of your knowledgeable country into the dim Inane of ours, you who have often let down the subtile hook of your curiosity into our so enigmatic vortex, you who have baited many specimens of dogma, opinion, creed and apology, jerrybuilded by various classes of the community through all grades from the simple to the artful and crafty, cannot fail to have hauled up that of Spontaneity of Expression."

And so on. Mr. Massingham has something to say if he would but say it. He is the most original critic we have had since Dixon Scott; though he must not be original to the extent of misspelling his proper names, misquoting his poets, calling a five-lined verse a distich, and confidently assigning to Ben Jonson the famous epitaph that may be Browne's, but is almost certainly not Ben's. This, as we have said, is a provocative volume. The wise reader will read it more than once.

Dr. Geraldine Hodgson is instructive. Much of her book has a last-century air—"The Legacy of Tennyson," "The Ethics of Browning," "The Poetry of Faith" and "The Poetry of Doubt" are some of its titles; but it is none the worse for that. In fact, the best parts of the book are precisely those that deal with the last generation. Dr. Hodgson is much sounder on Francis Thompson and the late Victorians than on John Masefield and the later Georgians—she must not, by the way, assign "The Shropshire Lad" to Laurence Housman—and she is perhaps best of all on the English mystics and enthusiasts and the French Parnassians and Symbolists. The book contains some helpful criticism, and its abundance of well-chosen quotations, with references fully given, should make it invaluable to the reader who wants a little guidance through the realms of gold.

Well, here they are, our four essayists. Acquire them all if you can; but if you must cut them down to two, try the effect of pairing them—the agreeable Lucas with the provocative Massingham, and the amusing Milne with the Doctor Perutilis.

GEORGE SAMPSON.

FACT AND FANTASY.*

In the preface to his new book Lord Dunsany speaks of "the few that seem to read my books in England," but one hopes that the phrase has its origin in modesty rather than in his publisher's returns, for Lord Dunsany's is a gift of writing which deserves wide appreciation. The quiet and exquisite cadences of his prose hold a place of their own in contemporary literature. He has written:

"In the blood of man there is a tide, an old sea-current rather, that is somehow alive to the twilight, which brings him rumours of beauty from however far away, as driftwood is found at sea from islands not yet discovered: and this spring-tide or current that visits the blood of man comes from the fabulous quarter of his lineage, from the legendary, the old; it takes him out to the woodlands, out to the hills; he listens to ancient song."

Lord Dunsany has not only listened to that ancient song but has learned it and transmuted it in language intelligible to modern ears.

That those ears are not, after all, entirely unappreciative is suggested by the fact that some of his books have passed into their second or third edition. A new edition of "The Book of Wonder," with its beautiful and appropriate illustrations by Mr. S. H. Sime, has just appeared. The stories in this book are very characteristic in the wanderings of their fantasy from loveliness the most ethereal to a grotesque and goblin humour; but perhaps the most remarkable thing about it is the prophecy with which it is concluded:

"I take farewell of my readers. But it may be we shall even meet again, for it is still to be told how the gnomes robbed the fairies, and of the vengeance that the fairies took, and how even the gods themselves were troubled in their sleep; and how the King of Ool insulted the troubadour, thinking himself safe among his scores of archers and hundreds of halberdiers, and how the troubadours stole to his towers by night, and under his battlements by the light of the moon made that king ridiculous for ever in song."

That was written in 1912, and in the years that followed something very like it occurred. The gnomes destroyed the fairy palaces of Flanders and France, and the fairies have had their vengeance. The gods have been very troubled in their sleep (at least one hopes so), and certainly the King of Ool (an inspired piece of nomenclature) is ridiculous for ever.

But Lord Dunsany has not told of these things in his old manner. Instead, he has written "Unhappy Far-Off Things," a book written in undertones to express a sorrow which may scarcely be uttered aloud. Yet it is unmistakably the same hand that wrote "The Book of Wonder" and "Unhappy Far-Off Things." There is the same sense of beauty and horror, and of the ever-close proximity of the two; while the humour of the older tales appears in that sensitiveness to the incongruous—for instance, to a green doll's pram seen among the ruins of a house at Albert—which runs through these sketches and adds to their piquancy.

"Unhappy Far-Off Things" is a beautiful book because it is written beautifully. But it is not a romantic book. It describes reality in terms of reality, though that reality has been seen through very sensitive eyes, and apprehended by a mind wherein the thought of beauty is ever-present to accentuate the tragedy of what has actually happened. It makes us feel, as no sort of ranting could, the destruction of beauty and happiness and quiet, and their replacement by desolation and ugliness and ruin which is without dignity:

"Not for any fancy of mine must you picture ruin any more as something graced with splendour, or as it were an argosy reaching the shores of our day laden with grandeur and dignity out of antiquity. Ruin to-day is not covered with ivy, and has no curious architecture or strange secrets of history, and is not beautiful or romantic at all. It has no tale to tell of old civilisations, not otherwise known, told of by few grey stones. Ruin to-day is destruction and sorrow and debt and loss, come down untidily upon modern homes and cutting off ordinary generations, smashing the implements of familiar trades and making common avocations obsolete. It is no longer the guardian and the chronicle of ages that we should otherwise forget: ruin to-day is an age heaped up in rubble around us before it has ceased to be still green in our memory."

The poet sees clearly, and sees that war is beastliness. It is only the member of Parliament who, with solemn face, can still make heroic phrases about it.

F. B.

* "The Book of Wonder." By Lord Dunsany. Illustrated by S. H. Sime. New edition. 7s. 6d. net. (Elkin Mathews.)—"Unhappy Far-Off Things." By Lord Dunsany. 5s. net. (Elkin Mathews.)

A PRE-EMINENT VICTORIAN.*

I.

"Everything is like a purse—there may be money in it, and we can generally say by the feel of it whether there is or is not. Sometimes, however, we must turn it inside out before we can be quite sure whether there is anything in it or no. When I have turned a proposition inside out, put it to stand on its head, and shaken it, I have often been surprised to find how much came out of it."

The key to Samuel Butler's mind is to be found in this note. His claim to immortality rests almost solely on his determination not to accept anything which failed to satisfy his reason. His father (like many another Victorian clergyman) relied on the power of the rod to reduce his

* "Samuel Butler: A Memoir." By Henry Festing Jones. 2 vols. 42s. net. (Macmillan.)

W Robertson Nicoll

R.J. SWAN,

children to submit to the dictates of their "infallible" elders. Samuel was strong enough to resist and, loathing one of his parents, strove to impress on other generations the fallacy of the fifth commandment:

"I believe that more unhappiness comes from the attempt to prolong family connection unduly and to make people hang together artificially who would never naturally do so than from any other source."

In other words filial affection must be natural, and cannot be forced. Butler's father by acting the tyrant, as in the case of his repeated attempts to coerce his son to pursue a course of action against his better judgment, forfeited all claim not only to love but even to respect.

From the day when he discovered the dangerous heresy that underlay the stereotyped gospel of "duty towards parents" until his death, Samuel Butler wrote books for one purpose only:

"I never write on any subject unless I believe the opinion of those who have the ear of the public to be mistaken, and this involves, as a necessary consequence, that every book I write runs counter to the men who are in possession of the field. . . . The history of literature is the history of the reversing of many a deeply-rooted opinion. . . . I confidently believe and hope that time will bring many to my opinion."

Small wonder that he lost money over his literary work: the wonder is rather that his losses were less than £1,000.

He found in the average Englishman one who "would have been equally horrified at hearing the Christian religion doubted, and at seeing it practised," and consequently set about doubting two of its cardinal faiths—the efficacy of infant baptism (this caused him to refuse to be ordained) and the fact of the Resurrection ("I can only accept his death and resurrection at the cost of rejecting everything that I have been taught to hold most strongly"). He also horrified the orthodox by taking Christianity, as he took everything, quite seriously, and practising it in a way which would have commended itself to the Founder of the Faith almost as much as it displeased the Christian authorities of his day.

When he required a rest from assaulting the Church he wrestled with the big-wigs of science:

"Science is infested by a lot of false prophets who do nothing but mischief, and try to stamp out everything which does not emanate from themselves."

So to make things less easy for the hacks of science he strove with Darwin, and evolved theories on heredity, instinct and memory which made him even more unpopular with the Darwinians than he had been with the parsons. The *enfant terrible* of science then strode across the realm of art and letters and declaimed such shameful things as his idolatry of Handel ("Best loved of all the dead whom I love best") to an astonished world, his belief that Nausicaa wrote the "Odyssey" (which caused the bat-eyed dons to regard him as a buffoon), his hatred of most of the Great Chams of Literature, Plato, Virgil, Tennyson, Dante, Dickens and Goethe; his contempt for style ("I never knew a writer yet who took the smallest pains with his style and was at the same time readable"), and his attitude to long poems ("a sonnet is the utmost length to which a rhymed poem should extend").

In all that he did we can detect an honesty of purpose which only a fool could doubt for one moment, and a consequent freshness of outlook which was absent from the work of all his contemporaries. He never sought to surprise for the sake of surprising. He simply asks us to get rid of all preconceived second-hand opinions, and form our judgment anew in every subject in the light of our own experience.

It is for this service that his name will live. It is not for his contribution to scientific discovery, or divine revelation or literary or artistic criticism. He was not a great critic, nor was he a great imaginative creator in spite of his one novel which is at least as likely to live as any that have been written during the last thirty years. His satiric power was certainly greater than any in our language, except Swift's, but in satire we do not, as a race, excel. His "Notebooks" are more valuable as a starting-point for controversial topics than any other book in existence: "Alps and Sanctuaries" is a peerless guide-book; he was a by no means contemptible poet, musician and painter, but he lacked the vision of a seer, the imagination of a poet, and the all-absorbing interest in his fellow-men that mark off the "big" novelist from the mere "best-seller."

II.

It is hard to imagine a man better suited to be the subject of a great biography than Samuel Butler. Here is a Victorian who refused to compromise, a saint who has been regarded by the devout as a blasphemer, a man so earnest in his convictions that he had to cloak them with a humour which hoodwinked all except the few, a completely lonely soul who was betrayed by friend and parents, misunderstood and reviled by those who took the trouble to notice him, and yet from defeat rose to victory and found three disciples in his lifetime and an ever-increasing multitude of devout believers after his death.

Mr. Festing Jones has added one more book to the world's great biographies, and Samuel Butler is at last sure of the only immortality he ever longed for: "Where dead men meet, on lips of living men."

Though Butler revealed himself in every line of his writings (particularly in his novel which fulfils his own dictum that the only readable fiction is autobiographical) there were many points on which we needed enlightenment before we could hope to get a complete portrait of one of the most lovable men of the last century. Now at last we feel that the whole of Butler is clear to us, the more so because we know more about those whose affections were bound up with his own. The original of Aunt Alethea, Miss Savage, stands out in these pages as a personality scarcely to be paralleled anywhere in fiction or real life. For fourteen years she wrote letters to him, which show her wit, her courage, her intelligence, her candour and her constancy to him to be of an order quite remarkable: but while she died (like the pretended sister of Viola) with her love unuttered, Butler was left to reproach himself bitterly for over-righteousness in not taking what she had to offer—("Death bound me to her when he set me free").

Mr. Festing Jones abandoned his home, his prospects, everything to become the companion of a man who stood a self-confessed failure in all that he had undertaken. And perhaps most charming of all are the deft strokes with which his faithful servant and friend, Alfred Cathie, is depicted. How many men are there of consequence, or of no consequence, who can claim to have received such a letter as this from a retainer:

"DEAR SIR,— . . . I have a little complaint to make. You never looked out of the carriage to see me standing on the platform as I always do. There was I, standing in the rain, and you never looked at me. . . . Yours truly, ALFRED."

Samuel Butler was a hero, even to his valet.

Mr. E. B. Osborn is scornful because Mr. Festing Jones includes in an Appendix a list of the clothes Butler took on his "outings." To my thinking it adds another valuable touch to the full-length portrait I am looking for, to hear that Butler brushed his hair exactly a hundred times every night, fifty times on each side of the head. Instead of less I could willingly have done with more details of his school days and undergraduate life. Somehow one had not been accustomed to think of him as an enthusiastic "cox" of a college boat. His friendship with Pauli (the man who sponged on him) finds no place in any of his books: only in his private letters could he bring himself to speak of him:

"I can now bring this squalid, miserable story to an end. On thinking it all over my main feeling is one of thankfulness that I never suspected the facts till after Pauli's death. The only decent end for such a white heat of devotion as mine was to him for so many years was the death of one or other of the parties concerned. . . . I felt pretty sure I was doing a great deal too much, but I had rather have done a great deal too

much than a little too little. . . . It was absolutely impossible for me to suspect that he had £9,000 of solid money behind him. . . . The more I think of it the more thankful I am that I never knew the truth until it was too late for my knowledge to tempt me into departing from the line of conduct which I had long decided upon. . . . I can laugh at the way in which Pauli hoodwinked me."

This episode does more to endear the merciless satirist and to humanise the hard, clear-thinking upsetter of shams than anything else we know of him.

No wonder Mr. Festing Jones is driven to cry aloud: "To me he was the dearest, kindest, most considerate friend that any man ever had. He was never selfish or egoistic, nor was there ever anything that required explanation."

After all valuations have been taken we are most likely to be right if we take him at his own:

"If I deserve to be remembered, it will not be so much for anything I have written, or for any new way of looking at old facts as for having shown that a man of no special ability, with no literary connections, nor particularly laborious, fairly but not supremely accurate as far as he goes, may yet, by being perfectly square, sticking to his point, not letting his temper run away with him, and biding his time, be a match for the most powerful literary and scientific coterie that England has ever known. . . . I have left unsaid much that I am sorry I did not say, but I have said little that I am sorry for having said, and I am pretty well on the whole, thank you."

Happy indeed is the man who can make such a statement his general confession in all good faith, but then Butler was, in spite of all, happy. It is this that goes so far to make him lovable.

S. P. B. MAIS.

THE VITAL MESSAGE.*

In one of his "Songs of the Road" Sir Arthur Conan Doyle tells the story of Bendigo, the Nottingham prize-fighter, who, after turning Methodist, began to preach at revival services. At one of these meetings, irritated by the interruptions of some of his former rivals in the fistic ring, Bendigo descended from the platform and laid about him lustily, "right and left, and left and right, straight and true and hard, till the Ebenezer Chapel looked more like a knacker's yard." The conversion of Bendigo presents some distinct points of similarity with the conversion of the novelist whose fame as a writer has not altogether eclipsed his renown as a sportsman and man of his hands. He too conducts revival meetings, and likewise descends, as it were, from the platform to administer sharp epistolary punishment to his critics in the Press. That the particular gospel "Sherlock Holmes" has espoused should be Spiritualism is to the ordinary observer as great a miracle as any of those comprised in what the scoffer calls the medium's "box of tricks." In "The New Revelation," his first book on this hotly-debated subject, Sir Arthur gave concisely the reasons which led to his taking up the position of a protagonist of the subject. In the present work, "The Vital Message," he develops his conclusions—"the sun has risen higher, and one sees more clearly and broadly what our new relations with the Unseen may be." Just now, when Spiritualism—at once a social phenomenon and a social portent—is the centre of such passionate dispute and so much confusion and complexity that to the impartial onlooker nothing very definite emerges, "The Vital Message" makes a timely appearance. It clears the air considerably, especially as regards its author's own particular views. Graphic, picturesque and realistic, his powers as a writer at least have been in no way impaired by his contact with the mysteries of the Borderland. Indeed, to some of those who are students of style, there will seem to be a distinct advance, for now he is no longer the weaver of entertaining fiction, but a man in deadly earnest on a subject which he regards as the most important in the world. Commencing with a consideration of the significance of the great war as a "moral shock" to humanity and a great clearance for the spiritual revolution which he believes will follow, he takes us in his own fashion, chapter by chapter, through the history of Modern Spiritualism from its inception in 1848 to its present-day developments, which include the now well-known experiments of Dr. Crawford, the Belfast engineer, and those of Dr. Geley, the French savant, Professor Henslow and other scientists whose names are too often quoted in connection with Spiritualism to need repetition here. That many professors in great seats of learning have examined and endorsed the facts is now well known to all who have made any serious study of the question. Only the veriest materialist now disputes them, and, so far as Spiritualism is concerned, the controversy centres mainly around the interpretations to be placed on those facts and the extent to which their cultivation may facilitate or retard the health, sanity and progress of the community. That question is dealt with in several chapters of the book. The author argues that at the moment when the Church is in urgent need of present-day scientific evidence of its claims, Spiritualism comes to its rescue with positive knowledge and actual proof, thus enabling religion to roll back the tide of materialism once and for all:

"With the actual certainty of a definite life after death, and a sure sense of responsibility for our own spiritual development . . . there will come the greatest reinforcement of morality which the human race has ever known."

Whether the reader is convinced or not, he cannot fail to be interested, for the narrative is interspersed with some well-authenticated instances of materialisation, clairvoyance and other psychic marvels. And the camera being now a common object of domestic life, the chapter on "Spirit Photography," with its reproductions of "spirit photographs," will appeal to multitudes of amateur photographers. However much his critics may challenge the author's conclusions, none certainly will question his sincerity.

DAVID GOW.

* "The Vital Message." By Arthur Conan Doyle. 5s. net. (Hodder & Stoughton.)

LIONEL JOHNSON, WYKEHAMIST.*

It is to be hoped that this book will send the younger generation back to reading Lionel Johnson. It was an accident that his biography and a definitive edition of his poems did not appear while his name was yet fresh in men's minds, but perhaps it is as well. These amazing schoolboy-letters will surely send many people to discovering the poems for themselves, and reading them in the light of what they know already of the writer. His poetry hardly perhaps earned its meed of praise in the time in which it was written. It was too withdrawn, too claustral, too stately for the nineties when the lyric was the thing, and a crowd was singing more or less clamorously. The wondrous boy, always a boy, even a child till the day he died, yet with the air of the sages and the ages about him, might well have seemed too deliberate, too formal to the nineties. There were critics in those days who roundly denied that Johnson was a poet at all. His was such deliberate, such considered poetry as asks for a deliberate and considered verdict. Somehow it has always stood aside, a little wistful, like Lionel himself, just without the doors. It is time for it to come into the light.

These letters were written to a group of correspondents, public schoolboys, like himself, between 1883 and 1885, between Lionel's sixteenth and eighteenth year. They are connected to some extent with literature, but mainly with literature as an illustration to religion, for Lionel was obsessed by religion. It would be amazing to find a schoolboy so obsessed, if one had not known Lionel, whom one thinks of as a wondrous child in the cradle. According to Buddhism, which fascinated him for a time, he might be supposed to have housed the spirit of St. Thomas Aquinas, or he might have been a reincarnation of William of Wykeham. His certainly was the monastic temperament in the highest degree. Scholarship and religion would

* "Some Winchester Letters of Lionel Johnson." 7s. 6d. net. (Allen & Unwin.)

WHAT I THINK ABOUT IT.

By "Manager."

My only excuse for occupying the columns of THE BOOKMAN is that, as the responsible head of a concern with an annual turnover of £250,000, I thought that many readers would be interested in my opinion upon that much-discussed subject, Pelmanism. I possess no literary "style," but I trust that plain speaking in everyday language will make amends for my lack of eloquence.

To be quite candid, I hate "stunts" and "crazes," and it was in that category that I placed Pelmanism when I first heard and read about it. I dare say there are many sound business men who have summarily dismissed it from their minds as being merely "another advertising stunt."

Probably I should never have changed my opinion had not circumstances forced me to make closer acquaintance with Pelmanism.

Without ever having won my way to any considerable position in the business world, I was yet fairly content with my modest progress. Suddenly, however, through pressure of external circumstances, I found myself in difficulties—difficulties so great that I clutched even at straws in the hope of deliverance. It was in this mood of semi-desperation that I said to myself, "Let's see if there *is* anything in this Pelmanism idea."

LOOKING BACKWARD.

Looking back on that period of trouble, doubt, delay and scepticism, I am forced to laugh and to wonder at my unwillingness to inquire into a thing because it was new—*and advertised*. But I know I am not unique in this: I am by no means the first or the only man who, having scoffed at Pelmanism, has subsequently taken the Course and has thanked his stars that he did so.

"Is Pelmanism worth while?"—Yes, most emphatically. As the typewriter is to the quill pen, and as the motor-car is to the donkey "shay," so is the Pelman-trained mind in comparison with the untrained mind. It is a case of trained efficiency versus rule-o'-thumb.

And I say this not only because I have in my own case experienced such tremendous advantages as the result of Pelmanising (my income is over six times what it was before I began my study of the "little grey books"), but also because I have observed what the Course has done for other business men. (And not only business men, but professional men too. I know a professional man who declares that the Pelman books are worth their weight in gold to him!)

In fact, carefully reviewing the matter, I think I may commit myself to the statement that I have yet to meet the man or woman who, having conscientiously followed the Pelman Course, has failed to benefit thereby.

I say "conscientiously"; and here is a point upon which I must make myself quite clear. The mere fact of entering your name upon the Pelman register does not automatically make you a success; you have got to *work* at the Course. It is a pleasant enough study, not in the least tedious or difficult, but you must work at it seriously. If you are not prepared to do this, you may as well save yourself the trouble of enrolling. On the other hand, if you feel disposed to give up an occasional half-hour to a most interesting study of self and possibilities, then I say, without hesitation, the sooner you enrol for the Pelman Course the better for your pocket, the better for your business, and the better for your interest and pleasure in life.

Business need was the motive that led me to take up the Course, but I can truthfully say that Pelmanism has entered largely into all phases of my life. I am, of course, very sensible of what I owe to it in the monetary sense, for it has made financial difficulties a thing of the past. In business it has developed in me powers of decision, concentration, discernment and judgment which have proved invaluable; yet higher than these I am disposed to rate the added interest it has given to my whole life.

It is not easy to express this feeling—here is where I feel the need of eloquence. But I think the average reader will understand what I mean when I say I feel a better and a *bigger* man; I get more out of everything; I *see* more; I *feel* more.

I suppose the handiest comparison I can make would be with a man who was purblind and whose perfect sight was suddenly restored. To such a man the world becomes much more vivid and real and delightful; whole hosts of new interests and pleasures are suddenly brought within his grasp.

Often and often, sitting alone with the "little grey books"—which I still read and re-read, by the way—I have exclaimed with positive delight at some sudden clarifying thought or idea. Every now and again I came upon something which explained an old puzzling difficulty, opened up a train of new ideas, revealed new sources of power, disclosed new possibilities, suggested new and better ways of doing things.

I had always been vain enough to consider myself a "brainy" man, but now I realise that although I had brains I did not know how to use them; hence my past comparative failure, hence my present success.

DRIVE OR BE DRIVEN.

There is a whole world of difference between *driving* a motor-car and being *driven* in one; equally there is a vast difference between *creating* circumstances and being the *creature* of circumstance. If we were disposed to be candid with ourselves, I believe the majority of us would recognise the alarming extent to which our plans and actions are decided or modified by "circumstances over which we have no control." A very humiliating position, that, and a very unnecessary one, as Pelmanism shows. If only by reason of what the Course does in the way of enabling students to master circumstances, Pelmanism would richly deserve all that its most enthusiastic supporters say in its praise.

The matter, to my mind, is always best considered by the light of actual experience, and when I compare my haphazard method of working in my pre-Pelman days with my present planned and organised progress, I feel well content with my experiment. The discipline of the Course has in my case proved of inestimable worth, and I am pretty confident that even the most successful and able business men would find it add considerably to their power.

I have stated as plainly as I possibly can what the effects and results of the training have been in my case, and I leave it to every reader to weigh the thing from his own particular standpoint. I have urged many to "take it up," and I have never heard a regret from a single one of the many who followed my advice. It is certainly worth investigating, and an impartial investigation is pretty sure to carry one farther.

Full particulars of the Pelman Course are given in "Mind and Memory," which also contains a complete descriptive Synopsis of the 12 lessons. A copy of this interesting booklet, together with a full reprint of "Truth's" famous Report on the work of the Pelman Institute and particulars showing how to secure the complete Course on special terms, may be obtained gratis and post free by any reader of THE BOOKMAN *who applies to the Pelman Institute, 20, Pelman House, Bloomsbury Street, London, W.C.1. Write or call to-day.*

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have been enough for him. As it was, earning his bread as a free-lance journalist—a literary one, of course—he was most sadly out of his due time and place.

One remembers how Newman's undergraduates discussed religion endlessly. Apparently Lionel and his group were a throw-back to those days. Indeed, when one comes to think of it, Lionel was very like Newman without his powers of leadership, and that perhaps was a question of physique. Lionel, unlike his fellow poet, Francis Thompson, detested cricket. I dare say there are many more boys in the public schools who detest cricket than one suspects, though they have not Lionel's courage to avow it. The letters are extraordinary. They are very intimate and full of a certain self-revelation, only one wonders if he did not keep a thin shell of reserve even for those he was freest with. Is not this Newmanism ?

"I once, in an essay for Ridding (i.e., the Head Master of Winchester), defined happiness as 'the having full scope in one's own sphere and circle for practising that rule of life which principle and instinct have approved.' Ridding looked at me with a smile and said: 'You have come into the world too late for that.'"

Lionel's religious vicissitudes were many. He would be a Buddhist, a Swedenborgian, an Anglican. One of the phases was when he made up his mind that he would be a priest, an Anglican priest. Always he is fighting fiercely for his point of view. He is always profoundly interested in ecclesiastics, and is eloquent upon sermons, just as in later years he loved vestments. Among my mementoes of him are a couple of stoles.

But he was far from being a prig or dryasdust. He was only a wonderful boy.

"I love flowers. I love music. I love literature: I love studying people; except in matters of taste, i.e., matters of culture, no one can excite my loathing nor my indignation."

One remembers Lionel's strange tolerance which might well have been a mark of sainthood. To few people can the poets have meant so much. He was offering them always to his friends—Browning most constantly. (It is amusing to read his raptures over "The Light of Asia," and his recommendation of Lewis Morris's latest. It just saves our Lionel from being too wonderful.)

Of many pieties offered to the memory of Lionel Johnson this is the most perfect. As a lover of Lionel, one's heart goes out to the friend who utters this lyric cry:

"The poor boy! The wonderful child! The loving angel, for an angel of God he was undoubtedly intended to be, and in all associations of my memory with him was and still is. I care nothing for the measure of the world's coarse thumb, this and no less was he worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher shaped."

KATHARINE TYNAN.

Novel Notes.

THE HISTORICAL NIGHTS' ENTERTAINMENT. Series II. By Rafael Sabatini. (Hutchinson.)

The embellishment of the dry facts of history with fictitious episodes and speeches, which could not have been reported to the historian, is as old a practice as the writing of history itself; but it has been left to the moderns to introduce realism. The use of fiction as a vehicle for the expression of historical facts has reached a high stage of perfection. The novel has not the limitations of the drama and affords an ampler scope for the exploration of the by-ways and less important episodes of the main story. It was Sir Walter Scott who showed the possibilities of history as the groundwork of the novel, and Mr. Rafael Sabatini has shown us how successfully history may be adapted to the short story. His conscientiousness is apparent from his introduction in which he is at pains to indicate where, and to what extent, he has strayed beyond the limits of strict historical truth. And it is amazing to find how little his art has obliged him to stray. There is of course individual interpretation of definite episodes—as, for example, the manner of the death of Amy Robsart, in which he differs considerably from Scott's story—but no departure from the basis of historical fact seems necessary. We are inclined to favour in this series the stories which deal with English subjects—"The Barren Wooing," in which the description of de Chuadra, the Spanish Ambassador, is excellently given—and the noble pictures of Sir Walter Ralegh and Lord Clarendon in "Sir Judas" and "The Path of Exile" respectively. Mr. Sabatini is an authority on Torquemada, so it is perhaps temerarious to question his description in "The Hermosa Fembra" of the Grand Inquisitor, more especially as he draws attention to this in his introduction. But it would seem that of all the characters portrayed, this one alone appears overdrawn and unreal. The most dramatic story is perhaps the first one, which the author admits to be entirely apocryphal. The treatment of Charlotte Corday in "The Tyrannicide" is exquisite in its tenderness and delicacy. These stories have a wide appeal, and their usefulness as a means of arousing interest in what otherwise might seem dryasdust facts, cannot be exaggerated. It is to be hoped that Mr. Sabatini will pursue this experiment and go even farther afield for his subjects.

INVISIBLE TIDES. By Beatrice Kean Seymour. 7s. net. (Chapman & Hall).

Mrs. Seymour has a combative mind, and a full armoury of words burnished and ready to her cunning hand. A book from her, then, whatever else it might or might not prove to be, was bound to be virile in thought and bravely and piquantly phrased. Her first novel, "Invisible Tides," is her and our complete justification. It is a good and moving story, brilliantly set down, having affinities, it seems to us, with "Jude the Obscure" on the one hand and with Mr. McKenna's "Sonia" on the other (which is not to say there is more than one Hardy). If this book merely added one more to the common run of

Photo by Basil, London **Mrs. Beatrice Kean Seymour.**

novels, one would not deem it worth while to point out the too frequent use of a conventional phrase like "of course," a tendency to overwork emphatic words of the "devastating" order, and a passion for parentheses that should be kept within artistic bounds. The fact that we do point out these little things may be taken to indicate our feeling that Mrs. Seymour has achieved, and at her first venture, a memorable book. In the opening chapters we have a profound and absorbing study of the development of the child-mind under varying conditions. Then suddenly the current of the narrative broadens and quickens, and the reader (despite any misgiving he may secretly entertain!) is made privy to Mr. Courtney's hurricane wooing of Helena. When the girl revealed somewhat of her very natural bewilderment to her mother, it was only to elicit the retort, "I can't imagine how you can talk like that of the man you have promised to marry." "That's just it," Helena had asserted. "I didn't promise, and I can't remember that he ever asked me." Nor *did* he ever ask her. And from the moment of the marriage one is prepared for the trouble which is not long in coming. The interlude with Hilary Sargent is treated with an unfaltering instinct for psychological truth. The relations of Helena and Hilary are delicately and poignantly portrayed, and have obviously engaged the sympathy and spiritual understanding of the author. It has to be confessed, however, that the return of Helena to Courtney after Hilary's death is hardly convincing. Either Mrs. Seymour's intuition has failed her at this point, or the wonderful chapters through which we have read have given us an exaggerated notion of Helena's strength of character and fidelity to herself. Mrs. Seymour is strong in characterisation, subtle and revealing in dialogue, and exquisite in her descriptions of nature, touched as they are with a fine imaginativeness. It is exceedingly pleasant to give a welcome to work of such high distinction, judged both as a novel and as a piece of writing. It is a sincere and passionate utterance on the eternal scheme of things, shot lightly through and through with shafts of native wit.

THE RAIN GIRL. By the Author of "Patricia Brent, Spinster." 6s. net. (Herbert Jenkins.)

Richard Beresford, tired of the Foreign Office and of his relations, and irking the ordinary routine of life, sets out along the "road to nowhere" in a south-westerly gale as a vagabond. Then "suddenly he stopped . . . and stood staring with astonishment at a gate that lay a few yards back from the roadside." For then and there he meets his rain-girl, and he is certainly not inclined (like Borrow with Isopel) to teach her—Armenian! "Ah yes," says the experienced novel reader, "we know those amateur (and susceptible) vagabonds! . . . those lonely roads! . . . those accidental girls! . . . those implacable relations!" But it is here that the experienced novel reader will err. For Richard is not the ordinary vagrant hero of sentimental fiction, nor Lola, his rain-girl, the usual heroine. Even the relations are refreshingly unlike the haughty aristocrats we know so well. The theme of the story if told baldly might have a familiar ring; but this only shows that the author knows the allure of an old romantic formula and is clever enough to endow it with a fresh vitality. So in place of the conventional sentimental comedy we have, what is rarer and more welcome, a genuine comedy of sentiment. The distinction is a real one; for we do not get humour and passion given to us in separate layers; but intermingled (chemically as the scientist would say) and treated from a single point of view—the point of view of a sensitive and observant intelligence. Slight as the story is in texture, it is worked out with an artistic thoroughness as welcome as it is rare. Both the Scylla of sloppiness and the Charybdis of melodrama are skilfully avoided. A word of praise must be accorded the publisher also for the artistic beauty of the cover design. The characterisation on the whole is excellent. The most successful piece of drawing is that of Lord Drewitt with his amusing affectations and genuine kindliness. He is never out of the picture—a genuine high comedy figure, who enlivens

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the story whenever he appears. As is natural in stories of this genre the action of the tale is expressed mainly in dialogue. Occasionally, as in the first colloquy between Richard and the Rain-girl, there are touches of unreality (as in the references to Thoreau and Jefferies). And why, by the way, does Richard seem to see something comic in the Rain-girl's predilection for the concertina? Surely it is a very beautiful instrument when well played? Occasionally, some of the jests (as on p. 313) are distinctly unworthy of the setting, and once or twice Richard's method of speech is insufficiently differentiated from that of Lord Drewitt. But on the whole the dialogue flashes along easily, aptly and wittily, and when necessary with agreeable touches of fantasy.

THE MASK. By John Cournos. (Methuen.)

Mr. Cournos has remarkable powers of description, and he has given us a wonderful story. There is no plot; it is rather a psychological study. The life of a Russian boy—a Jew—both at home in his Russian woods and later in Philadelphia, is set out with the utmost detail of intimacy. A thread of philosophical reminiscence interposes like a Greek chorus and forms both explanation and palliation. Our sympathy does not lie with Vanya (John, who is the hero of the story) but rather with his stepfather Gombarov who, in some remote way, reminds one of Paragot; we therefore feel something like annoyance at the degeneration of this character towards the end of the book. The author's unrelenting realism is responsible for this no doubt; and so we find ourselves—like Douglass, a little surprised and shocked at some of the revelations, but anxious to read on. There is no definite end, and the book closes suddenly, but with a hint of more to follow which we shall impatiently expect. For it leaves Vanya not more than fifteen years of age and the period between this and the time when, as in the intervals, John Gombarov unburdens himself to his friend Douglass, must be crowded with events and opportunities for those philosophical musings which form the principal charm of this well written book.

PEG OF THE PRAIRIE. By Mrs. Coulson Kernahan. 5s. net. (Sharp.)

Mrs. Coulson Kernahan has launched out on what is to her a new branch of writing, and has given us an excellent story for girls. Peg, a Canadian born and bred, is dissatisfied with the rough, hardworking, though happy life on her father's prairie farm, and envies her well-to-do cousins who live in London. She eagerly accepts their invitation to go and stay with them, with the option of remaining there altogether. Mrs. Kernahan draws a very striking comparison between the girl's life in Canada, in which there is a wealth of local colour and some vivid descriptions, and the very different life over in England, which does not come up to Peg's rosy expectations. When she is far away from the prairie, she begins to realise how dear its wild freedom is to her, and her brother's prophecy, that she would soon wish herself back again, is fulfilled in Peg's own heartfelt declaration: "It is beautiful, oh, yes, quite beautiful in England—but give me the prairie every time! I want to herd the cows again, and milk and make butter, and do the chores with Jo. Guess doing nothing all day isn't what I'm used to. I want to work in the worst way." Young readers will love the sensitive little Canadian girl, and will find her adventures enthralling from the moment they make her acquaintance in the sod stable, to their last glimpse of her on the big liner steaming down the Mersey, homeward bound.

THE SHRIEKING PIT. By A. J. Rees. 7s. net. (Lane.)

No kind of story can claim to be better than a good mystery that needs a lot of clearing up. The mystery here is a murder, which many strong circumstantial pieces of evidence fasten on James Ronald Penreath, a murder done in a lonely inn, with the visible incentive of £300 cash to a man who had just been turned out of his hotel for failing to pay his bill. As Penreath was heir to a great family, attempts were made to get a verdict of insanity, aided by a nerve specialist who had seen his strange behaviour at breakfast in the hotel, and diagnosed it as *furor epilepticus*. Penreath refused to speak at his trial, and was condemned to death. Luckily however, Colwyn, an American detective, had also seen Penreath's behaviour, and put it down to shell shock, and though later he also thought him guilty, a slight clue sent him to work unravelling the story with happy results, although the innkeeper, whom he fixed on as guilty, was not the man. The murderer was a deaf waiter whose ingenuity caused the whole mystery, which is solidly and convincingly built up. The story is well told, and well worked out. It is decidedly above the average detective story, and it displays as much power of characterisation as saves it from the common danger of machine-like movement which is the great pitfall of such tales.

THE GESTE OF DUKE JOCELYN. By Jeffery Farnol. 6s. net. (Sampson Low.)

Mr. Jeffery Farnol, in whimsical mood, tells the story of how Duke Jocelyn won the hand of the fair Yolande in a quaint and original style. "In prose, blank-verse, and rhyme it shall be told," the author promises his daughter Gillian, to whom the book is dedicated; and from time to time throughout the book Gillian is made to interrupt and criticise her father's story, and to please her he will change an incident or description, as, for instance, when he writes:

"At this, Sir Pertinax growled in his beard——
(*My daughter* GILLIAN *interrupteth*):

GILL.: A beard? O father—beard will never do!
No proper knight a beard ever grew.
No knight could really romantic be
Who wore a beard! So, father, to please me,
No beard: they are, I think, such scrubby things——

MYSELF: Yet they are worn, sometimes, by poets and kings.

GILL.: But your knight——

MYSELF: Oh, all right,
My Gill, from your disparagement to save him,
I, like a barber, will proceed to shave him.

* * * * *

Sir Pertinax, then, stroked his smooth-shaved chin,
And thus to curse he softly did begin. . . ."

It is all delightfully told, this story of the Age of Romance, with an ease and charm that make it peculiarly attractive.

FATE UNSEEN. By J. Talbot. (Digby, Long.)

Samuel Redd, after four years in a Canadian prison, finds himself a free man and back in England once more, on the way to discover his old mother and the girl to whom he has been engaged. For four years they have heard no word from him, and to shield them from grief he resolves they shall never know of the disgrace he has suffered. They have both waited for him in perfect faith that adds to his remorse, yet brings him overwhelming happiness; but the shadow of an ill-spent youth rises up to greet him, and except for the love of a woman whom he has wronged, must have soon blighted his awakening hopes. So strong and unselfish is this woman's love that he gains strength from it, and although he marries the other girl, it remains with him through life like a guiding star. The past bears fruit in a sensational climax which brings the story to a sad and unexpected finish. "Fate Unseen" is evidently the work of a beginner; the characterisation is rather weak and it would seem that Miss Talbot has written more from her imagination than from close observation of human nature. She has, however, an appreciation of dramatic situations and her novel will appeal to those who can enjoy a story for the story's sake.

BLUE MOONS. By MYFANWY PRYCE. 6s. net. (Hodder & Stoughton.)

There is no list of former books on Miss Pryce's title-page, so we draw the conclusion that this may be her first novel. If that is so, our sincere congratulations are offered to her. This story of Magsie Osmond, from the first scene at the vicarage, where, somewhat after the fashion

of King Alfred, she allowed the tarts to burn while the others were at church on Sunday morning—to the last scene, in the dim war-time-lighted London streets, when she courageously tells her love to Ley Baron—is a story revealing clever intuition, keen observation, facility of expression and, better than all, the power to interest. Without much help of plot or dramatic action, Miss Pryce's people live, and feel, and do—each alone, and all together—their share in the development of Magsie's mind and heart. The theme is, put baldly, that of a clever, beautiful girl, rather impatient of her surroundings, who longs to write books and have free play for her intellect. But her heart is kind towards her generous relatives at the not too well-off vicarage, her manners are good—and a war is on, and one thing after another baulks Magsie's desires. In the end, however, after nearly wrecking her own happiness, she discovers that love for Ley Baron is stronger than any other desire. This bald sketch gives no adequate idea of the undoubted charm of the story. Country life at the vicarage, and the London life of Magsie and her friends at war work are vividly portrayed, and Miss Pryce hits off foibles amusingly and never unkindly.

THE LAIRD OF GLENFERNIE. By Mary Johnston. 6s. net. (Constable.)

This is a gallant attempt at quasi-historical fiction. It does not escape the notorious pitfalls: chiefly, perhaps, because Miss Johnston appears to have been too conscious of their existence. It is a story of a great friendship between two young men, which love brought temporarily to disaster but which ultimately proved deeper than passion. The future laird of Glenfernie came of stern Covenanting stock, while Ian Rullock was the son of a prosperous London East India merchant. The two boys had a lonely upbringing which deepened their attachment and mutual dependence in spite of radical differences of temperament. Glenfernie loved Elspeth Barrow with all the strength of his reserved nature, but Elspeth found him scarcely a young girl's ideal and she gave her heart at once to young Ian, now a dashing officer in King George's army. Then followed Ian's departure and Elspeth's suicide and Glenfernie's resolute pursuit of his quondam friend. Fate brought them together as officers in the opposing armies at Prestonpans and Culloden, and with the downfall of the Stewart cause Glenfernie had his enemy at his mercy. But the old feelings reasserted themselves, and Alexander and Ian departed together to seek a new life in the East. The story is admirably told and its workmanship compels respect. The style, however, is curiously laboured, and the effort to avoid Wardour Street jargon results in some tortuous and cryptic conceits. As a matter of fact, the historical setting is quite unimportant and seems to weigh down a fine study of character.

The Bookman's Table.

ON ALPINE HEIGHTS AND BRITISH CRAGS. By George D. Abraham. 10s. 6d. net. (Methuen.)

For the practical mountaineer this book contains much valuable information, embodying, as it does, the experience of some twenty years. But it is also sufficiently attractive to appeal to a wider public, and the general reader will not willingly lay it aside. Those of us who have no experience of the thrills of mountain adventure can feel a pulse of excitement in the descriptions in this book, and if it does not tempt us immediately to leave the fireside, at least we can sympathise with those who indulge in this hardy and invigorating pastime. It is satisfactory to see that the author devotes at least one half of his book to British mountains; for it seems absurd to go to Switzerland while there are still British mountains unscaled. The mountains of Wales and the Lake district provide, if one may judge from this book, at least as much adventure

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